

Visiting U.S. legislators briefed on peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein stressed the need to support the ongoing Middle East peace process at a meeting here with a visiting team from the United States Congress.

At the army headquarters Thursday, where the team listened to a briefing on the development of the Jordanian Armed Forces, the King said that efforts towards establishing stability and security in the region should receive further backing.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces, Abdul Hafez Mirai Al Kaabneh was among the senior army officers attending the meeting.

The team of congressmen met earlier with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali who reiterated Jordan's total commitment to the Middle East peace process.

In reviewing the related developments, Dr. Majali said that Israel should negotiate directly with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) because it is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Dr. Majali also discussed water issues, noting that Jordan was facing water shortage problems because Israel has seized the waters of the Jordan River depriving the Kingdom of its rights.

In discussing the general situation in Jordan and the country's economy and other matters, Dr. Majali said that the Kingdom had shouldered the brunt of the Gulf crisis which adversely affected its social, economic and services sectors, noting that the situation was heightened with the return to the country by more than 300,000 Jordanian expatriates who used to work in Kuwait and other Gulf states.

The country's economy, added Dr. Majali, has been facing difficulties because of the continued economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations on Iraq.

Information Minister Ma'an Abu Nowar, Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani and Minister of State for Legal Affairs Khaled Al Zoubi attended the meeting.

Abu Nowar proposes 'press code of honour'

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Ma'an Abu Nowar Friday said he has proposed to the Jordan Press Association (JPA) drafting a Jordanian press code of honour that would later be enacted as a provision of the Jordanian Press and Publications Law and the JPA Law and be binding to all Jordanian journalists.

Dr. Abu Nowar said he offered the idea first to JPA President Suleiman Al Qudah, adding that such a charter would be issued initially by the JPA following intensive and comprehensive consultations with Jordanian journalists, writers and intellectuals.

He said the ministry of information has referred to foreign and Arab press codes of honour before it arrived at its own version, which he said, will be open to discussion, debate and thorough study by journalists before being approved in its final form.

The text of the ministry's version states that the Jordanian press carries a noble message free of slander, defamation, calumny, opportunism, blackmail and abuse of individuals or groups.

It also states that the Jordanian press adheres to the principles of honesty, good faith and objectivity, based on indivisible truth and commitment to obtaining information through legitimate means and verifying it before publishing.

The Jordanian newspaper should also be committed to correcting erroneous news items, editorials, columns, and commentaries upon the request of any side harmed by their publication, or upon their choice with the aim of enhancing the papers' credibility and preserving their reputation on internal and external fronts, the text adds.

It calls on the Jordanian press to defend the principles of human rights, to respect citizens and their rights, reputation, honour and dignity whether by refraining from publishing their personal or family problems or violating the sanctity of families.

It also urges the press to support the higher national and humanitarian interests of the Jordanian people and the Kingdom's rural, municipal and civic societies in their progress, growth and development and offer services to them equally and fairly.



Ma'an Abu Nowar

In its 11-point code of honour text, the ministry of information also calls on Jordanian journalists to adhere to the principles and norms of the profession by exposing any violations of them or of the code in text and spirit.

It also urges journalists to refrain from direct or indirect instigation of the public to use or threaten to use political or social violence, and to refrain from inciting others and violating moral, social or religious norms and teachings.

The journalists are called upon by the code of honour to support the sovereignty of law and to respect the independence of the judiciary, and not to side with any individual or group against other(s) in any legal case unless a verdict is issued by the court.

The journalists, the text states, are committed to honestly using their interviews by not publishing off-the-record information, whether official or private, and are committed not to publish state secrets, particularly those pertaining to the Armed Forces, which might benefit "the enemy or any possible enemy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or any sister Arab states."

The text also adds that the Jordanian journalists are committed to adhering to and implementing the press and publications law in text and spirit.

They should also honestly and delicately distinguish between press material and advertising material, between news items and promotion of certain persons or objects, it adds.

Dr. Abu Nowar, who announced the text in an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Jordan's independent or political newspapers base their legitimacy on the Jordanian Constitution.

The minister added that these publications should base the legitimacy of their duties and activities on the press and publications law which has demarcated the lines for their responsible freedom to publish and express their views freely in words, pictures and drawings, and on the JPA law which regulates the profession and takes care of journalists' concerns.

He said the Jordanian press is committed to expressing thoughts and impressions, and publishing news on national and pan-Arab issues on the basis of the National Charter as they interpret it and in accordance with their convictions regardless of their stands on any issues published.

The Jordanian press, he said, is a national and free press governed by the ethics of the profession and its noble humanitarian message and its comprehensive national responsibility since the Jordanian newspapers are national fora expressing political, intellectual, social, economic and cultural positions.

Brig. El Edroos dies in Amman at 68

AMMAN (J.T.) — Brigadier S. Ali El Edroos of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and author of the "Hashemite Arab Army 1908-1979," died of heart failure in Amman at the age of 68.

Brig. El Edroos (Ret.) was born in Hyderabad, India in 1925 and educated at Bishop Cotton's School, Bangalore and at the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College, Dehra Dun. His father, the late General S. A. El Edroos Hilal-e-Osmani, CIE, was Commander of the Hyderabad State Forces.

Brig. El Edroos was commissioned in the British Army in 1944 and in 1948 served with the 7th Infantry Division in the Kashmir Campaign. He served as an instructor at the Pakistani Military Academy from 1950 to 1951.

In 1954 he graduated from the Canadian Army Staff College in Ontario and was appointed Brigade-Major of an infantry brigade.

He was appointed instructor at the Command and Staff College, Quetta in 1963 and in 1965 assumed command of the 14th Battalion, Frontier Force Regiment which fought as an armoured-infantry battalion in the Indo-Pakistani War (1965).

In 1967, Brig. El Edroos became Colonel-Staff of an infantry division and a year later assumed command of an infantry brigade.

He was posted in 1970 to East Pakistan as Chief-of-Staff, Eastern Command. In 1971, he was appointed Director of Military Training, General Headquarters, Rawalpindi and retired in 1972.

From 1962 to 1976 he served in an advisory capacity at the General Headquarters of the Jordanian Armed Forces. From 1984 until his death, Brigadier El Edroos served as an instructor at the Jordanian War College.

His book on the Hashemite Arab Army was published in 1980. He also authored "The Arab Military Personality," which is still under publication.

Brig. El Edroos' knowledge of the Middle East included service in Egypt and Palestine in 1945 and an extensive "battlefield tour" from Gallipoli to the Hejaz and to the Golan Heights in the aftermath of the 1973 Ramadan War.

He held the highest of medals from the Pakistani Army, as well as the Order of Independence (Al Istiklal) decoration conferred on him by His Majesty King Hussein in 1980.

Brig. El Edroos is survived by two sons and two daughters.

Engineers group numbers 30,000

AMMAN (Petra) — The number of Jordanian engineers who were registered with the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) since it was established has reached 30,000, according to JEA Secretary General Hatem Bishawi. Pointing out that the association includes seven engineering sections, he said, 6,063 engineers were registered with the association over the past three years. The number of engineers to join the association this year is expected to reach 2,100, he said, adding that 1,110 were registered since the beginning of the year. He noted that the JEA is considered one of the biggest associations in Jordan with its members constituting 60 per cent of association memberships in the Kingdom.

Correction

In an article published in the Jordan Times issue of Aug. 12-13, entitled "Poll mechanism still a mystery as voters' roster about to close," the writer cited a report by the Associated Press agency in which it quoted Minister of Information Ma'an Abu Nowar as saying: "There is a clear article in the Constitution that empowers the King to dissolve the Parliament and rule by decree at any time."

Dr. Abu Nowar informs us that he did not in fact say that the King could "rule by decree at any time."

WHAT'S GOING ON

- Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Eshebelia Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre. The paintings depict Jordanian-Palestinian heritage, Jordanian antiquities, Arab Jerusalem, rural life and natural scenery.
 - Exhibition of a new collection of art works by Princess Wijdan Ali at The Gallery, Hotel Jordan Inter-Continental.
 - Exhibition entitled "Hashemite Paintings" by Jordanian artist Iyad Al Masri at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - Exhibition of British archaeological projects in Jordan, organised by the British Institute in Amman for Archaeology and History, at the British Council.
 - Exhibition of paintings by 25 Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre.
 - Exhibition by Iraqi artists Mohammad Hussein Judi and Shawkat Al Alousi at the Royal Cultural Centre — opening ceremony at 7 p.m.
 - Feature film entitled "Mary poppin'" at 6 p.m. at the American Centre (139 minutes).
- WORKSHOP**
- Workshop entitled "Theatre in Education" presented by the British expert Geoff Gilham at the New English School.
- JERUSALEM FESTIVAL**
- Exhibition of paintings, posters, Palestinian costumes, books and other items on the Holy City of Jerusalem at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
 - Exhibition of books on various subjects at Al Hashimiya Plaza, in downtown Amman.
 - Arabic poetry recited by Basel Rafal'h, Izzedin Manasrah, Habib Zayoudi, Ibrahim Nasrallah, Jamil Hatmal and Mohammad Lafi at the Scientific and Cultural Centre of Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
 - French film entitled "Morts Au Jardin" at 8:00 p.m. at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

Official reiterates Japan's support of Arab stand on peace settlement

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior Japanese official wound up a three-day visit to Jordan Friday after talks with senior officials here on bilateral issues as well as the 21-month-old Middle East peace process and reiterating Tokyo's support for the Arab stand that any peace settlement with Israel should be based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Toshimori Shigie, head of the Middle East and Africa Department at the Tokyo foreign ministry, is preparing his country for the next round of the multilateral talks which are part of the peace process, said the Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Yuji Ikeda.

"Mr. Shigie reviewed with senior Jordanian officials the progress in the multilateral talks and familiarised himself with Jordan's positions on the various issues being discussed," said the ambassador, noting that Japan was an active player in the regional discussions which involve water-sharing, refugees, economic cooperation and arms control in addition to chairing a working group on the environment.

Mr. Shigie's talks here amounted to "a general assessment of various issues ahead of the next round of the multilateral talks," he told the Jordan Times.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, who is also foreign minister, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan held talks with Mr. Shigie Thursday.

The talks included "a review of the peace process and its bilateral and multilateral phases, and Japan's positive role in the process," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Petra quoted the Jordanian officials as reaffirming the Kingdom's commitment to the peace process "as a means to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the restoration of Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination."

The officials also expressed satisfaction with Jordanian-Japanese relations, Petra said.

Ambassador Ikeda said Mr. Shigie also discussed bilateral Jordanian-Japanese issues, but "not in specific terms" and that the two sides agreed to seek means to further cooperation in various fields.

Planning Minister Ziad Fariz briefed Mr. Shigie on Jordan's socio-economic programmes. The Japanese official told Petra that his government was prepared to consider assisting Jordan's programmes, particularly in tourism and the environment.

Mr. Shigie, who was visiting the ancient Nabatean city of Petra Friday, was scheduled to leave for Egypt later in the day. He will also visit Israel.

In comments carried by the local press, the Japanese official was quoted as reaffirming his country's belief that any Arab-Israeli peace settlement should be based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the need for international support and encouragement for the peace process.

Mr. Shigie also said Japan was exerting all possible efforts and stood ready to provide the necessary financial and economic support in cooperation with the international community to improve the Palestinian economy in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He also noted that his visit to the Middle East comes ahead of meetings of the multilateral working committees on water and the environment in November.

Japan is believed to be envisaged as one of the key contributors to an international economic development plan, for the occupied territories. Initial plans, included in a World Bank report, call for injecting up to \$1.2 billion in international contributions into the occupied territories. The total programme is estimated to be worth \$10 billion.

Scant information is available on the World Bank report, but sources familiar with the draft said it provides a sector-to-sector evaluation of the economy of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and recommends a host of projects aimed at creating employment and setting up services in education and health.

"In general terms, it also specifies a priority list of industrial production and investments," said a Palestinian source, adding that the report was now undergoing "fine-tuning."

Meanwhile according to Petra, the director of the First Middle East Division at the Japanese foreign ministry, Akio Tanaka, is expected to arrive in Amman today (Saturday) on a three-day official visit.

During his stay in the Kingdom, Mr. Tanaka will hold talks with the minister of state for foreign affairs, the secretary general of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the president of the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

The Japanese official will discuss Jordanian-Japanese cooperation in economic and other fields.

Government to proceed on decentralisation—Majali

AMMAN (Petra) — The government will proceed to decentralise its administrative affairs and will further empower governors to deal with matters in their own regions, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said Thursday.

Speaking at a meeting held at the Interior Ministry, Dr. Majali said that provincial governors will be authorised to take full responsibility in matters directly related to the public via consultative and executive councils in their respective regions.

The meeting, which was attended by governors as well as the ministers of Planning and Finance, reviewed a draft government plan intended to apply the concept of decentralisation and give the governors more authority in drawing up their regions' budgets with the assistance of the consultative and executive councils.

The ministers of Planning and Finance, Ziad Fariz and Sami Gammo, outlined the main procedures to be followed in preparing such budgets.

The draft plan on decentralisation will soon be debated by the Council of Ministers, according to Interior Minister Salameh Hamad who attended the meeting.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr. Hamad said the plan gives the governors the same powers of a minister in their own regions in terms of controlling the public administration system, implementing government-approved projects, monitoring the work of the municipalities and approving fiscal budgets, as well as other related matters, in order to ease the pressure on the central government in Amman.

While at the Ministry of Interior, the prime minister examined arrangements and measures taken by the ministry in preparing for the coming parliamentary elections scheduled for Nov. 8.

According to Mr. Hamad, as of last Wednesday evening a total of 1,383 million citizens of the 1.6 million eligible to vote had registered.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King visits PSD, congratulates Pakistan

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday paid a visit to the Public Security Department where he met for a while with the PSD Director Maj.-Gen. Abdul Rahman Al Udwan and was briefed on the services offered by the PSD to the public. Upon arrival at the PSD the King was received by Maj.-Gen. Udwan and his assistants, the commander of the Badia and Border Posts Police Department and senior PSD officers. King Hussein Friday sent a cable to Pakistani President Wasim Sajid, congratulating him on his country's independence day and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the Pakistani people further progress and prosperity.

Housing Bank expands services

AMMAN (Petra) — The Housing Bank has not suspended its telephone and electricity bill settlement services to citizens, but rather has developed it, according to bank sources. The bank said it is still processing telephone and electricity bills for clients through official authorisations made by customers to the bank, allowing it to debit the amounts due from their accounts. The sources said that any person can open an account with the bank and officially authorised it to settle such bills through his/her account, thus saving the inconvenience of waiting in long lines. The sources said that so far more than 20,000 people have taken advantage of this service.

Officials travel to U.S. to import wheat

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministry of Supply's Secretary General Mustafa Khleifat today (Saturday) leaves for the United States at the head of a delegation to hold talks with U.S. agriculture officials on importing American wheat. The delegation will offer a \$30 million tender for the procurement of the wheat.

Petra exhibit held in Basel

BERN, Switzerland (Petra) — An exhibition of photos and Nabatean antiquities was recently held at the Antikenmuseum in Basel Switzerland. During the Festival, supervisors delivered speeches praising the Jordanian government and the country's institutions for holding the exhibition, which will be opened until November and then moved to other Swiss cities. Representatives of Basel city, the Antikenmuseum and members of the Jordanian Embassy attended the festival. The exhibition was inaugurated under the patronage of her Majesty Queen Noor in Zurich last April.

Iranian envoy presents credentials

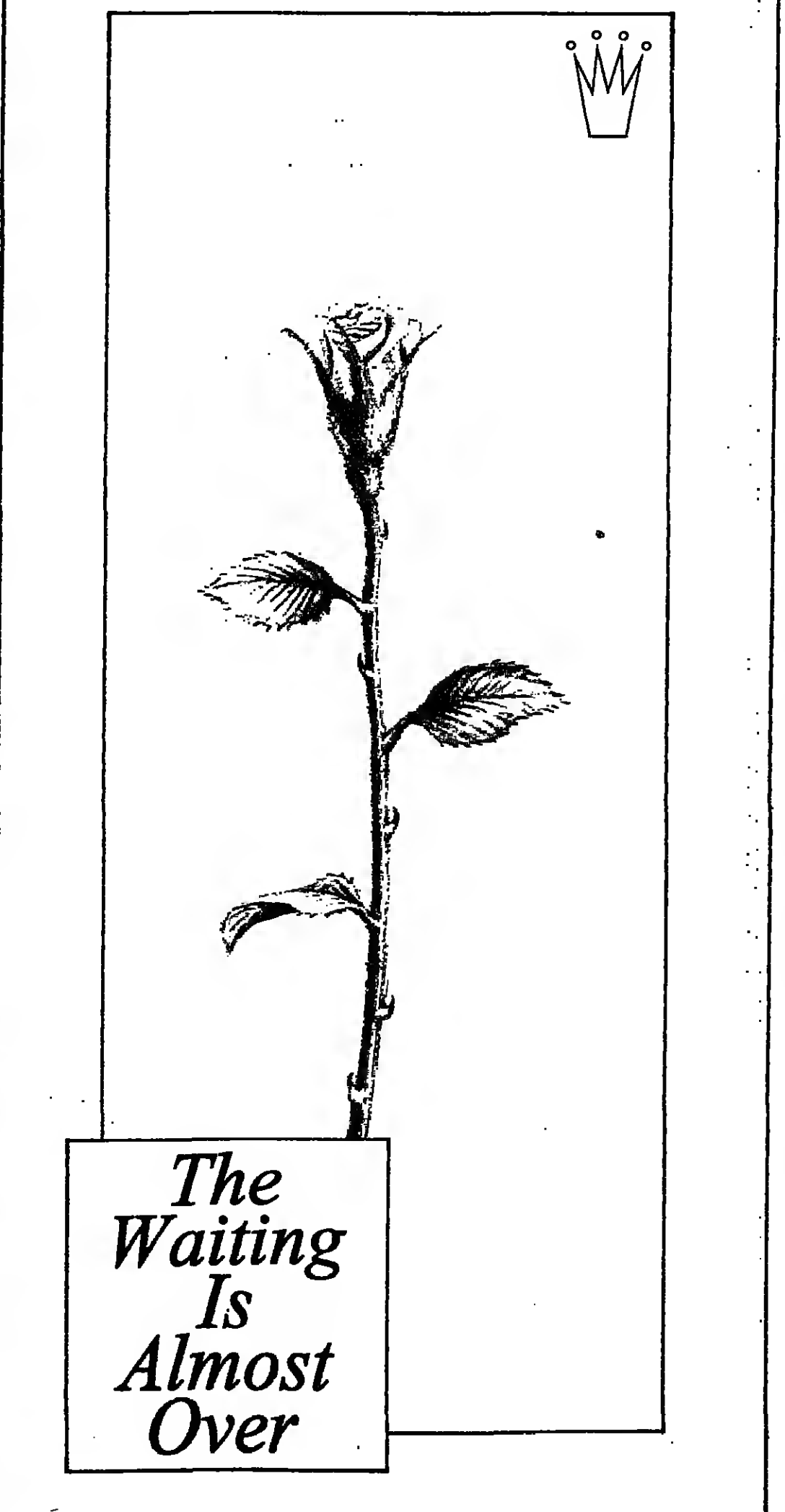
AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan Thursday received credentials of the newly-appointed Iranian ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Destamajilian.

PSD forces leave for Croatia

AMMAN — Public Security Director Maj. Gen. Abdul Rahman Al Udwan Thursday bid farewell to the second group of public security personnel to leave for Croatia to join the United Nations peace keeping forces there. Attending the farewell ceremony were senior PSD officers.

UNDP to support pollution prevention project

AMMAN (Petra) — An agreement was concluded Friday between the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Under the terms of the agreement, the UNDP would offer financial support for a project aimed at monitoring gas fumes emanating from car exhausts to be carried out by the society in cooperation with the concerned authorities.



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Jordanian Perspective

Palestinians clean act one in peace process

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE REJECTION by the PLO Executive Committee of the resignations of three senior members of the Palestinian delegation to peace talks with Israel signals a new phase in the 21-month Middle East peace process. Indeed, the new phase implies Israel dropping the veil it has been throwing over its clandestine contacts with the PLO in Colorado, Paris, Sweden, Norway, Romania and, most recently closer to the Middle East, in Cairo.

For many analysts, an open contact between the Israeli government and the PLO means an eventual resumption of the suspended dialogue between the Tunis-based organisation and Washington.

Seen from within the Jordanian approach to the peace process and the political intricacies that surround it, this is a welcome development since direct PLO involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian track of negotiations has been one of Amman's objectives since the peace process was launched in Madrid in October 1991.

Notwithstanding the immediate repercussions, positive or negative, of the latest upheaval in Palestinian ranks, one has to look at what prompted it and what were the roles of the various players in the affair.

The questions that have to be asked include: What was the real root of the crisis that led an open rift between the PLO leadership and delegation leaders Faisal Hussein, Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat? What was the Egyptian role in the affair, a role that Foreign Minister Amr Musa denied with such vehemence that it was too strong a denial to be believed? What sort of influence did Haidar Abdul Shafi exercise through his two letters addressed to the Palestinian people? What were the personal ambitions that played a key role in formulating a policy that is crucial to the genuine interests of the Palestinian people?

Many analysts believe that tension between the PLO leadership and the delegates started to build starting with October, 1991, when a parallel Palestinian delegation appeared to assume the role of a watchdog over the delegates who attended the peace conference in the Spanish capital. The team stayed at the Spanish Fox 400 Hotel and had direct satellite communications with PLO Chairman Arafat, apparently giving him a blow-to-blow account of what was going on inside the conference halls and outside. The Palestinian delegation to the conference was ensconced in Vittoria Grande Hotel in Madrid, with no direct, uninterrupted access to the "kheir".

Mr. Arafat's advisor, Nabil Shaath, who headed the watchdog team, was described as the maestro of the Palestinian political orchestra while Mahmoud Abbas, a member of the PLO Executive Committee who played a key role in formulating the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee, was called the architect of "future relations between Jordanians and Palestinians".

No doubt, the actual Palestinian delegates to the conference did not have a chance to express their frustration over being told in blunt terms to behave in a so-and-so-manner and speak so-and-so words in Madrid since it was too much of a media circus out there in the Spanish capital; and what mattered most was the euphoria over the "historic" occasion when the Israelis and Arabs sat together on a table.

By all counts, the four or five days that the Palestinian delegates spent in Madrid were too short a time to go beyond the ceremonial trimmings of the conference, which seemed to be addressing millions of television viewers around the world rather than the parties directly involved in the conflict.

In any event, frustration continued to build among the Palestinian delegates as it became clear that they were somehow relegated to the position of having to take orders from the PLO with little effective means to make their own views and voices heard. They were caught in a situation where they had to make announcements of decisions which ran contrary to the very wishes of the constituency they represented: the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

Very visibly, the influence of the PLO had started to wane in the occupied territories, particularly among the youth, who felt that their sacrifices and continued struggle against the Israeli occupiers led to nothing tangible in terms of ending their ordeal under occupation. Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister who had attended the Madrid conference with all the appearances of a sincere Israeli wish to resolve the basic Middle East conflict, dealt a severe blow to the peace process when he announced after his defeat in June 1992 general elections that he had always planned

to prolong the negotiation for 10 or more years while he sought to normalise relations with the non-Palestinian Arab parties to the peace talks.

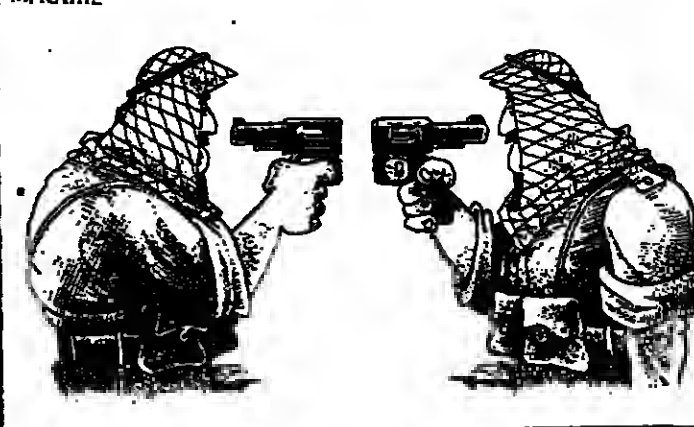
Many members of the dominant Fatah group led by Mr. Arafat were so disillusioned with Mr. Shamir's proclamation that they left the group in disgust and joined the Islamic resistance movement Hamas since there was no guarantee that Mr. Shamir's successor Yitzhak Rabin had any different ideas.

The desertion in the ranks of Fatah was very visible in June 1993, when Hamas defeated Fatah in many professional and student elections in Nablus, Ramallah and Jenin. Elections in Hebron were postponed when Fatah registered some 200 labourers as students and paid up to JD 1,000 each as their tuition fee.

The desperation of Fatah was clear, particularly that it had decided to spend such a sum of money at a time the PLO was finding itself cornered and forced to curtail spending in education, health and welfare for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

All said and done, the Palestinian ranks in the occupied West Bank seem to be evenly split between Fatah and Hamas compared with 80 per cent for Fatah some time ago.

The Gaza Strip had always been a Hamas stronghold.



The losing grip of the mainstream PLO in the occupied territories reflected on the peace delegates who were forced to face daily and directly the new aggressive move of the Palestinian street in the occupied lands. They were much safer in the luxury of five-star hotels in safe Arab capitals and Washington.

What added salt to the wounds was the reports from Tunis of financial improprieties as well as Stalinist-type decision-making within the PLO. Mr. Arafat's sudden outburst of anger at the delegates during deliberations on whether to attend the ninth round of talks in April hammered home the point that the delegates were just figures who had no choice but to follow orders.

The sacrosanct image of a PLO leadership cracked further when Abbas Zaki joined Sakhr Habash and Mohammad Ghoneim in denouncing the suffocating centralisation of power.

All those factors had a major influence among the peace delegates, who also realised that they stood no chance of convincing the Palestinians in the occupied territories — despite their own convictions to the contrary — that cantonment was a national substitute for liberation. The map of Palestine, if the Tunis version of a solution were allowed away, would resemble a leopard's skin with black and white Israeli settlements and Arab villages separate from each other.

It is this factor which made Dr. Abdul Shafi call for a collective leadership of the PLO and democratic reforms as well as a total revision of the Palestinian decision-making. That also explains why Dr. Abdul Shafi, regardless of all arguments related to immediate points in the peace talks, demanded that the peace process be suspended. The PLO had lost so much support in the occupied territories by then that none of the delegates could even dream of arguing that they were following orders from the PLO, which is theoretically the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, within and outside the occupied territories.

Dr. Abdul Shafi saw no point in participating in the multilateral negotiations since, in his own words the regional talks amounted

to a short-cut to normalisation of relations between Israel and the Arab states while the Palestinian cause languished somewhere in the corridors of Washington and the streets of the West Bank and Gaza.

In one of his public letters to the Palestinian masses, the respected physician from Gaza called "the rearrangement and reorganisation of our homes before engaging ourselves with other issues."

It was the reflection of a realisation that Palestinian blood would flow in the streets of Palestine if the Gaza-first option was exercised, as the PLO showed every intention to accept the Israeli-inspired proposal without going through the much-needed exercise of sounding out the Palestinian masses through dialogue. Such a dialogue would obviate any chance of Hamas-Fatah clashes in the Gaza Strip if, for some miracle, Israel were to withdraw its military forces from the Strip.

The addition of Jericho to the Gaza-first option is too insignificant to appease West Bankers, who no longer attach much importance to Mr. Arafat, who has been reported as saying that he would be in as much control of Palestinian affairs while reigning from Gaza and Jericho as he was when he was in Al Fakhani and controlled events in Lebanon before the Israeli invasion of 1992 ended his supremacy there.

This perspective of Mr. Arafat made the PLO leadership in Tunis appear much more moderate and conciliatory than the peace delegates themselves in a unique anomaly in any political development in the Middle East.

Though it is positive to have a new PLO department to be entrusted with the task of handling the peace delegation, the question that remains unaddressed is how the PLO is going to recoup its political losses in the occupied territories.

Mr. Rabin, riding on what Israel portrays as the success of its "operation accountability" in Lebanon, is in a better position to start a dialogue with the PLO. If Washington follows suit, as is expected in a scenario along this line of thinking, we might find a more stable track of negotiations to carry Palestinian aspirations.

Perhaps, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher could even be credited with sparking, unwittingly or unwittingly, a chain of events that eventually leads to cleaning the Palestinian air.

In the final analysis, however, the net outcome of the entire political exercise, including the negotiations, will depend on the Israeli state of mind to make the concessions necessary to bring peace to the region.

Parallel to the Palestinian political developments, Egypt is uneasy now. Signs are emerging that Cairo was more interested in facilitating agreements between Israel and Syria and Lebanon, leaving the Palestinians out in the cold with half-cooked solutions which could only foster dissent and disarray on the Israeli-Palestinian track of negotiations.

Seen from Cairo, any revamping of the Palestinian scene towards a coherent position supported by the Palestinian street could be detrimental to its interest, given the fact that Egypt is trying to assume the role of an undisputed regional power which could make or break Arab politics and consolidate its self-styled posture as the only power able to deliver the Palestinians.

The vehemence with which Mr. Musa denied reports that Cairo played a key role in conveying ideas and position papers between the PLO and the U.S. can be nothing but a reflection of the alarm that Cairo felt over the course of events on the Palestinian scene.

On the hand, Cairo wants to reinforce its position with Washington as a strong lever to pry Palestinians from firm positions. On the other, it does not want to be seen as having leaned on the Palestinians to accept U.S.-Israeli prescribed solutions. It is a very delicate rope-trick, and given the realities on the ground today, the PLO leadership has to entertain the Egyptian overtures and try to block an explosion of the whole thing on its face.

Within the Palestinian context, however, the resignations of Mr. Hussein, Dr. Ashrawi and Dr. Erekat appear to have served the first objective — of hammering home the inevitability of having to come up with a strong Palestinian strategy in the peace talks acceptable to the Palestinian street. It is too early to say whether the PLO leadership is mentally disposed to seek such a strategy, which, no doubt, will add a totally new concept to the peace process and scramble the scenario Israel has been trying to build since Madrid.

The futility of violence

THE EXPERIENCE of Egypt in its bid to combat terrorism and clip the wings of Muslim fundamentalism deserves attention and study for it has implications for other countries with similar problems.

Like the experience of Algeria could also be of immediate value in view of the fact that it has almost a perfect situation as Egypt. Other countries in the world, especially in the Middle East may also encounter similar internal conflicts that could threaten their stability.

While there is not enough documented data on the Egyptian scene yet, the recent revelations by an Egyptian opposition daily, if substantiated, would shed new light on the relationship between martial law and the Egyptian government to which most developing countries unfortunately resort whenever they face difficult situations.

According to the newspaper, Al Sha'ab, armed violence has in fact increased since the introduction of the law "to combat terrorism" instead of the other way around. In an effort to corroborate its conclusion, the newspaper asserted that the cycle of violence in Egypt has increased dramatically since July of 1992 when the terrorism law took effect. In terms of statistics, there were only 45 terrorist activities in the two years that preceded the invocation of the law whereas the number of such incidents increased to 239 in one year alone between July of 1992 and July of 1993.

The newspaper questioned recently by an international body about its "martial law" regime and the death sentence. On these two points, the Human Rights Committee, the international judicial body charged with monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), found that Egypt was "not in conformity".

The bigger lesson to be drawn from the Egyptian and Algerian cases, however, could be the proposition that the resort to shortcuts can never be the answer to internal conflicts, including terrorism and fundamentalism. A much more enlightened approach needs to be applied based on proper diagnosis of the problems at hand. Surgical counter moves on the basis of emergency legislation and the unrestricted application of capital punishment are obviously archaic methods that have proven their futility time and again. Terrorism needs to be uprooted by addressing its root causes. Extremism in all its forms must likewise be dealt with at an early stage in a multi-dimensional perspective. Putting to death people involved in terrorism or terrorism is not exactly the right or effective prescription.

The situations of Egypt and Algeria therefore need to be very carefully assessed by all states contemplating similar policies or measures.

LOCAL PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAYED AL SHABAB daily urged the Palestinian people to abort their attempts to sow dissension among Palestinians and said the Palestinians have no alternative but to close their ranks and remain steadfast. The paper said that the Israeli prime minister had claimed that Israel will not hold contacts with the Palestinian people living outside the occupied territories, including the PLO, and regards Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel. By this Mr. Rabin is trying to create differences among the Palestinian negotiators and their PLO leadership, said the paper. It goes without saying that both the negotiators and the PLO leaders are in agreement on the return of Arab Jerusalem to Arab Sovereignty, to serve as the capital of a liberated Palestinian state, since for the Palestinians, Jerusalem is an integral part of the occupied West Bank, added the paper. It is regrettable to see the Palestinian negotiators at odds with the PLO leadership as differences can only encourage Israel to try to tamper with the Palestinian unity and create trouble for the Palestinians at the peace negotiations, the paper said. It is indeed sad to see the negotiators and the PLO leadership still unable to settle their differences and bridge the gap and divergent views about negotiating of the peace talks, it added.

The paper warned that should these divisions continue, they are bound to cause harm to the whole Palestinian cause.

A GUEST columnist in Al Rai daily drew attention to the fact that while the residents of Amman practise freely their right to vote in parliamentary elections, they are deprived of the right to vote in municipal elections. Dr. Zeid Hamzah, who is also a former health minister, said that numerous pretexts were given in the past for denying the Amman residents the right to elect their own municipal council like the other municipalities in Jordan. The writer said that 20 years have passed during which the Ammanites were denied the right to vote and elect their municipal council and the process of appointing municipal council members has been reduced to successive councils failed to live up to the people's expectations. Nearly half of the population of Jordan live in Amman, at its residents are deprived of the right to elect their own council, he said. He added that the needs of third districts, added the writer, Mayor of Amman and his council have been appointed over the years by Jordan's successive governments without any consultations with the Amman residents who realise the city is theirs more than others, said the writer. Now that Jordan is living in democracy, said the writer, it is unreasonable for this state of affairs to continue, and, he said, the people of Amman should move ahead and demand their right to elect their own municipal council.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Differences do not serve Palestinian cause

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

The local press last week gave prominence to the differences between the PLO leadership and the Palestinian negotiating team, the stalled Middle East process, prospects for reconciling Arab states and a host of domestic affairs.

The recent row within the Palestinian echelon clearly indicates that there is something seriously wrong and the crisis was just a symptom, according to Mahmoud Rimawi a columnist in Al Rai newspaper.

It seems, said the writer, that divergent views exist between the PLO leadership living outside the occupied Arab territories and the freedom fighters inside over the peace process.

The writer said there is no alternative to closing the Palestinian ranks in the face of Israel's serious challenges since differences can by no means serve the Palestinian cause.

Rimawi's advice was echoed by another Al Rai columnist, Tareq Masarweh, who said that the PLO leadership should by no means be weakened. The writer said that the Palestinians should be alert to Israel's serious plots against them and close their ranks and avert a repetition of the differences that were discussed lately in Tunis.

The writer said that the Palestinian negotiators have acted wisely by resorting to consultation with the leadership in Tunis on the next step in the peace negotiations.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the recent differences among the Palestinians stemmed from the fact that the PLO leadership lacked democracy. Salameh Ekour said that since the end of the Gulf crisis the PLO leadership has been facing difficulties and serious challenges due to influences from other Arab states and foreign nations which caused breaches in the Palestinian ranks.

Therefore, the leadership should not remain subject to the decision of one man and should open the door for other parties' views so that the decisions can commit all factions and the peace negotiators.

Al Dostour daily discussed the peace process, noting that while the Arab parties have displayed commitment to the peace, Israeli bulldozers are speeding up the construction of Jewish settlements in Jerusalem.

The writer, Mohammad Kawash, said that Israel is trying to isolate the status of Jerusalem from the rest of the discussions over the occupied land. He said that the bulldozers are working fast in Jerusalem while the Palestinians are undecided yet over the next move

at the peace negotiations. Mazen Hamad, a columnist in Al Dostour, voiced apprehension over the outcome of Mr. Christopher's tour of the region which, he said, came in the aftermath of the latest Israeli aggression on Lebanon.

The writer noted that statements coming out from Washington indicate that Mr. Christopher has succeeded in making progress along the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Syrian tracks.

At the same time, and to prove that Mr. Christopher was trying to find separate peace formulas, the U.S. secretary of state failed, in his statements during the tour, to mention that the peace process was based on U.N. resolutions, rather he gave threatening statements about what could happen or how Israel could act in the future in the absence of a settlement imposed by the U.S.-Israeli alliance.

Commenting on the Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's visit to Qatar, Abdul Rabin Omar, a columnist in Al Rai daily, said that the visit paved the ground for reconciliation among Arab states. In the current, crucial situation, there can be no alternative to reconciliation and Arab solidarity, said the writer.

Al Dostour hailed the visit as a courageous step aimed at restoring normal relations among the Arab countries. Qatar and Jordan have now transcended the elements that had marred Arab-Arab relations during the Gulf crisis and have opened a new chapter in their cooperation that would serve as an example for the other Arab states.

We look with real optimism to the outcome and future developments resulting from Prince Hassan's visit to Qatar, said Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Rai daily. Qatar, which has restored diplomatic relations with Iraq after the Gulf crisis, is taking steps towards reestablishing solidarity among Arab states at the political and economic levels, said the writer.

He said that Jordan and Qatar have always maintained strong ties of brotherly cooperation and the Prince's visit was bound to enhance such a relationship.

A columnist in Al Dostour called on the Audit Bureau and the newly established Bureau of Administrative Control and Inspection to examine the case of furnishing government offices.

Ahmad Shaker said that while head offices of a number of government departments have sufficient supplies of offices, space and equipment, others, like those in the provinces, or branch offices around the capital, lack the minimum requirements for office work and the furniture is in a miserable state. The writer said that certain offices are furnished with imported pieces of furniture costing the state a fortune.

LETTERS

Selective exposure?

To the Editor:

IN HER report entitled "Arab human rights group demands resignation of administrative committee" published in the Tuesday, Aug. 10 issue of the Jordan Times, Ms. Sa'eda Kilani parted with journalistic impartiality and chose to twist facts through the exercise of selective exposure and coverage.

To start with, Ms. Kilani attended the meeting as a member of the General Assembly of Arab Organisation of Human Rights (AOHR) and not as a journalist, since no journalists were invited or allowed to attend.

The meeting was an extraordinary general assembly of AOHR and not a rally or a public meeting or event. In this respect, nobody was authorised to report on the meeting on its proceedings. Moreover, Ms. Kilani neither sought permission nor was she granted one by the committee of the chairman to report on the proceedings.

Second, the report is full of mistakes and it attributes acts and decisions to the administrative committee of the general assembly. In addition, she misquoted some members.

Moreover, if the sentiments of Ms. Kilani were with Mr. Leith Shbeilat or a particular party or group, then this should have not affected her impartial reporting, assuming she was authorised to report.

Any reader of Ms. Kilani's report would have thought that the extraordinary session was held with a view to impeaching the administrative committee. This is not true because this was not on the agenda. In extraordinary sessions, agendas do not change.

The call for the extraordinary session had come from Mr. Shbeilat who complained to the general assembly in its ordinary session held on May 25 that Al Nafeer case (in which he and Deputy Yaqoub Qumash were accused) did not attract the attention it deserved from AOHR.

The general assembly agreed at the time to the request of Mr. Shbeilat to hold an extraordinary session in two months time to discuss Al Nafeer case.

The first invitation attracted no support and, thus, achieved no quorum. According to the law, another invitation had to be issued within two weeks and it would be legal irrespective of the number committee members, which would have made the majority vote 19 votes on which Ms. Kilani seemed to base all her analysis.

The general assembly of AOHR has around 300 members among them 154 with voting right since they paid their subscription fees.

Ms. Kilani failed to refer to something that was frequently stressed by many members which is that the issues of human rights are indivisible and that people, including Mr. Shbeilat, cannot rights violations as it pleases them or as they may see befitting to their interests.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights,
Jordan Branch,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Venezuelan deaths in storm show Third World woes

By Gary Regenstreif
Reuters

CARACAS — In the Third World, where the poor live precariously and urban planning is largely an abstraction, a tropical storm with one third the strength of hurricane Andrew can be 10 times as deadly.

When Andrew struck the U.S. southeast a year ago with its 250 kph winds, only 17 lives were lost, after Floridians conducted what may have been the largest peacetime evacuation in U.S. history.

This weekend, after tropical storm Bret hit the Venezuelan capital with relatively tame winds of 70 kph, ramshackle dwellings perched above one another collapsed in deadly landslides.

By Monday, rescue teams had already pulled out 95 bodies. Clues to the weekend deaths can be found in a series of woes common to the Third World, including inadequate safety warnings, poor urban planning and dangerous living conditions among the poor.

In Venezuela, thousands of slum-dwellers live in rickety "ranchos" made of tin, plastic and concrete, many perched on mountainsides and built in recent decades as immigration swelled and the cost of living soared.

Running water is scarce and electricity is usually stolen from the power lines.

When Bret hit, it ripped roofs from houses, sent others tumbling, toppled trees and even knocked over concrete walls around Caracas before heading towards Colombia.

As rescue crews picked through rubble and mud for victims, officials scrambled to prevent disease and to accommodate thousands left homeless.

The stark difference between the Venezuelan capital's densely populated mountainsides and the

Miami region's sprawling flatlands may in part explain the dramatic disparity in the death tolls.

Three days before Andrew roared into Florida last August 24, more than a million people had been told to flee and local media broadcast virtually non-stop reports on hurricane preparedness for the weekend before the storm.

Andrew skirted the major metropolitan areas and struck southern Dade County, a flat area of relatively sparsely populated suburbs and small towns.

While it caused more than \$20 billion worth of damage and destroyed thousands of homes, it caused relatively few casualties.

A year later and about 2,000 kilometres south, Bret left a far higher toll in its wake after it swept onto the Venezuelan mainland from the Caribbean.

The governor of Caracas and weather forecasters initially predicted that the force felt in the capital would be minimal and urged residents to stay home and keep windows open in case wind or flying debris smashed glass.

By late Saturday, the storm lashed Caracas with its winds and torrential rains began loosening the earth under the slums ringing the capital.

By then it was too late. In the early hours of Sunday, Bret ripped through the shantytowns.

Heavy rains every year pitch slum dwellings down mountain slopes, since their crude construction makes it difficult to anchor them down.

"Every time there is a heavy rain there is a chance some of these shacks could fall," Caracas Civil Defence Director Rafael Chacon said in an interview on Monday.

The government has tried to move them out but without much success, due to a scarcity of a

place to put them or funds since oil sales — Venezuela's primary source of income — has dropped about 20 per cent in dollar terms in the past three years.

And despite the continued danger in the slum areas, some homeless tried on Monday to return to the landslide sites.

Caracas Mayor Aristobulo Isturiz, himself a product of the

city's impoverished districts, warned them to stay away for fear ground loosened by the storm could still give way.

"Many people refuse to be moved. Until now we have used only persuasion," Mr. Isturiz said. "Painfully, we will have to use force because we will not allow the number of dead to rise."



Rescue workers search rubble Aug. 9, one day after tropical storm Bret hit the heavily-populated hillsides surrounding the Venezuelan capital (AFP photo)

Russian veterans remember largest tank battles in history

By David Ljunggren
Reuters

BELGOROD, Russia — Fifty years on and the gently sloping grain fields of southern Russia are still disgorging their mementoes of war — shattered bones, shell fragments, rusting grenades. Small groups of veterans watch combine harvesters chug peacefully across lands which, in a short summer month in 1943, were ripped apart as Germany and the former Soviet Union fought the largest tank battle in history.

The German side lost 2,900 tanks, the Red Army 2,000. "The sky turned red and black. You couldn't see more than 150 metres ahead. You couldn't even see the sun," said Sergeant Sergei Cheshov.

"People, tanks and animals were all burning — the stench was atrocious. Tanks were crashing into each other left, right and centre. We just lay there, watching steel clash with steel."

Adolf Hitler had planned to wipe out a humiliating defeat at Stalingrad by encircling and destroying Soviet armies concentrated in a salient near the southern town of Kursk.

The German troops were to be spearheaded by colossal columns of armour, including the new heavy Panther and Tiger tanks.

The Red Army, all too aware of the threat, dug a formidable series of defences and poured tanks into the salient.

Hitler confessed to his senior generals that the plan — "operation Citadel" — made his stomach churn but nevertheless gave the order to attack on July 5.

"We were sitting around that morning when the shells started flying. We were all sure we'd die," said Nikolai Ozhedayev, driver of a T-34 tank, the workhorse of the Red Army.

"Inside the tank you could see virtually nothing. We were dressed in thick linen overalls," said Mr. Ozhedayev, who like most

members of the tank crews, was permanently half-deafened by the noise of battle.

"It was incredibly hot. We had a ventilation system in the turret, but it was little use against the fumes, gas and smoke."

The fighting peaked on July 12, when 500 German and 700 Soviet tanks clashed head-on in fields just outside the village of Prokhorovka near Belgorod.

On the battlefield, tanks swarmed around each other looking for the chance to slam shells into the lightly-protected sides and rear of their opponents.

"There were tanks burning everywhere at Prokhorovka," said intelligence Captain Boris Monakhov, who, like the few remaining veterans of the clash, still seemed faintly surprised that he had avoided the common tankman's fate of being burned alive.

"One T-34 was hit and the crew bailed out, only to see a Tiger bearing down on them. The engineer jumped back into the blazing T-34 and rammed it into the Tiger, blowing both tanks to smithereens," he said.

The veterans gathered together in Belgorod — some 720 km southwest of Moscow — in early August to officially mark the end of the battle for Kursk had little idea at the time of the magnitude of the fighting.

"No one really knew what was going on or where our lines were. It was so loud you couldn't hear a thing," said Mr. Cheshov.

"One minute you were standing next to someone, the next they'd gone, leaving only a few bloody shreds of flesh behind."

By the end of the first day at Prokhorovka both sides had lost around 300 tanks each.

"We had to spend three days at a time in the tank during the battles — you didn't dare leave," said wireless operator Yevgeny Trapnikov.

The last red army line of defence were the anti-tank guns, whose crew had very short life expectancies.

"During a battle like that your

hair stood up on end, for hours and hours," said anti-tank gunner Gerasim Drobysky.

"We had a 'small 57mm' gun which had no hope of penetrating the front armour of the German tanks," he said. "If you fired too early it inevitably spelled the end. We covered the gun in branches and leaves and just waited."

During the Prokhorovka battle Mr. Drobysky's team sat patiently until a Tiger tank was just 20 metres away.

"We hit the tracks and managed to disable the tank. As the crew scrambled out we finished them off with a machine gun."

Intelligence officer Vasily Petukhov, scrambling into a disabled T-34 to investigate what was wrong with it, saw to his horror that a German fighter-bomber was closing in for the kill.

"We swung the turret towards it, loaded the first shell that came

to hand and fired," he said. "There was a huge explosion and it first we thought the plane had dropped a bomb. Then we smelled aviation spirit and realised we'd actually shot it down."

The Red Army hung on grimly, regrouped its forces and launched a series of powerful counterattacks in early August.

The Germans, shattered by the loss of so many tanks, never again launched a major assault against the Russians.

Just under two years later Soviet troops were locked in savage hand-to-hand combat in the ruins of Berlin which helped speed the war to its close.

Mr. Drobysky was there, somehow having survived the fighting across Europe, but almost dismissed the memory.

"Kursk was by far the worst of all the battles," he said with a shudder.

A need for reform in Jordanian-Pakistani ties

By Dr. S. Farooq Hasnani

IT IS mainly because of the inherent basis of the creation of Pakistan that such Arab/Muslim causes as the Palestinian struggle and the like have been supported with consistent conviction. In this context, it may be recalled that Pakistan was one of only two nations (the other being the United Kingdom) that formally acknowledged the unity between the two banks of Jordan in April 1950.

Since its independence, Aug. 14, 1947, Pakistan strictly maintains that it would not grant recognition — directly or indirectly to Israel till the establishment of an independent and sovereign state of Palestine. The people of Pakistan perceive that any gesture of flexibility towards the Israelis during the delicate phase of Arab-Israeli peace negotiations would be no less than a signal of encouragement to the occupier of the Arab lands. It is widely believed amongst those who are well versed with the sentiments of the masses that Pakistan should be the last country to recognise Israel, and that also in consultation with such brotherly allies as Jordan. As testified by history, the Pakistanis have rejected a course of convenience or double-play, whenever it came to the basic interests of the Arab/Muslim societies.

The rationale of Pakistan's close ties with the Arabs and the Muslim communities of other lands goes well back in history, especially to those circumstances that contributed towards the establishment of Pakistan. Islam was introduced in the area by a young 17-year-old Arab commander — Muhammad Bin Qasim in 711 A.D. The Arab forces under his command liberated the Sindh province and the southern Punjab of the present day Pakistan, while the Mughals (1206 to 1857) had come from the Fargana Valley in present Uzbekistan.

Pakistanis have always viewed the Hashemite rulers and the Jordanian people with esteem and trust. The Kingdom has fairly developed institutions, relying mostly on its educated and well-trained manpower. Pakistan has also looked with admiration to Jordan as it came out with distinction from various crises. A Pakistani Brigadier, Ali Ali Edroos in his book "The Hashemite Arab Army, 1908-1979", while describ-

ing King Abdullah Bin Hussein, pays tribute to the Hashemite rulers in general when he writes that the "largeness of mind, which along with...tolerance of humanity, genuine democratic spirit and underlying sense of humour distinguish the King from the narrow, fanatical, insincere and pettifogging minds of a certain class of politicians and self-made leaders."

The Jordanian policy of conducting secure ties with such Muslim countries as Pakistan can be explained by the identity of beliefs of both the nations on matters of regional and international interest. "We have strong and concrete affiliations which are based on our common faith. We also appreciate what Pakistan did to help organise the Jordanian forces," has said King Hussein about Pakistan on Oct. 4, 1987. This bears testimony to the fact that the two nations, though separated by geography, have remained attached to each other in the most difficult phases of their respective histories. Earlier, on Nov. 13, 1966, the King had made similar remarks when he said that he would never forget the Pakistani position adopted for the Islamic and Arab causes.

Pakistan holds Jordan's sovereignty and well-being as a prime priority in its policy projections and the same is true about Jordan's sentiments towards Pakistan. The mutual appreciation has been tested thoroughly through various stages of regional challenges. Jordan's six Air Force F-104s were placed at the disposal of its Pakistani counterpart during the hour of trial in December 1971. This generous demonstration of brotherhood is highly appreciated by the Pakistani people of all shades of public life.

By refusing to grant recognition to Israel and by supporting the legitimate Muslim causes, as the struggle of the Bosnian Muslims, and by taking a solid stance in favour of the people of Afghanistan in their long struggle for independence from the Soviet Union, it has been established that the Pakistani foreign policy proceeds to contribute towards the unity and prosperity of the Muslim societies.

The Jordanian government and people provided active support and assistance to the Afghan struggle, within the framework of the United Nations and other

relevant forums. In recent times we note a remarkable similarity of perspective regarding the Bosnian situation and a common stance was adopted by the two nations in respect of accepting a sizable number of refugees from the embattled land.

Jordan and Pakistan continue to be active members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) as there exists a common perception regarding the importance of this organisation in the present day global developments.

Pakistan, being a founder member of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), which apart from Pakistan comprises Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, the five Muslim Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan, can play its part to establish more solid Jordanian linkage towards the ECO members as in conformity with the national interests of Jordan. This is in view of the fact that the Jordanian leadership's prudence has conceived the relevance of the new emerging Central Asian region in upcoming world arrangements.

The weaker link in relations between Jordan and Pakistan prevails in trade and socio-cultural fields. There are common aspirations of the two nations in granting assistance to each other during times of threat to their respective territorial sovereignty.

There is a unanimity of view in the literature of cooperation amongst nations that trade is the beginner in solidifying the ties between two or more societies. Security and defence arrangements are considered to be the last and the most difficult aspect of collaboration that can be achieved between any two or more nations. But in the case of Pakistan and Jordan the opposite seems to be true. Economic exchange should be given more support so that a genuine balance is maintained in the totality of the relationship. Reliance on a routine type exchange of good gestures and living in the shadow of past achievements would not be enough to sustain normal relationship patterns in the rapidly changing global circumstances. Moreover, the 1950s and 1960s style of diplomacy from the Pakistani side has to be thoroughly readjusted where the recent

developments in the Middle East region are concerned. Both sides should be alert to the demands of the approaching century and help establish a secure comprehension of their respective societies.

In order to redress some imbalances in the relationship between the two countries much needs to be done. On Jan. 24, 1993, memorandum of understanding was signed between the parties in which two joint ventures were announced, based on Jordan's most lucrative phosphate export product. It was agreed that phosphate acid plant would be set up jointly in Jordan and a fertilizer plant, based on the finished product from the Jordanian side would be established in Pakistan. Apart from that, it was recently announced that Pakistan would buy a large quantity of phosphate from Jordan thus enhancing its export volume of import. The accomplishment of the joint project would certainly give incentive for ventures in other fields of activity. Its success largely depends upon the removal of red tape and bottlenecks from the Pakistani bureaucratic side. In such projects, the main problem lies in the absence of a system of compliance. A high power committee needs to be established. Its job should be to assess periodically the progress and report to the respective highest decision-making authorities.

Pakistan must recognise the Jordanian would prefer to break the barrier of trade monopoly established by few international consumers of phosphate. Sovereign nations are naturally shy to depend on one or two sources and would prefer to expand their export market. Monopolies are dangerous as it ultimately leads towards political blackmail and dictations.

The way Jordan and Pakistan view themselves and each other makes it easier for both countries to establish ties — not on the basis of temporary convenience but on much more solid foundations.

The author, a professor of political science at the University of the Punjab, Lahore, is currently working with the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Jordan Ice & Aerated Water Company Ltd.,

The sole franchisee of Pepsi cola International in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has resumed its production and distribution of Pepsi, Mirinda, Seven Up, Diet Pepsi and Diet Seven Up in

cans

Bearing the name of the above company in addition to its line of glass returnable bottles as of 2 August 1993.

Amman / Telephones

897113 - 892015 - 892014

وزارة الأشغال العامة والإسكان
دائرة العطاءات الحكومية

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT TENDERS DIRECTORATE

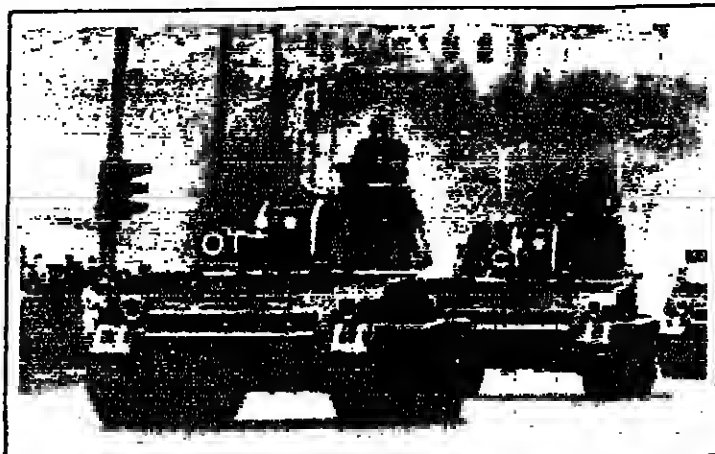


INVITATION FOR TENDER NO. (129/93) CENTRAL

International firms, specialised in telecommunications, who are interested to participate in this tender, are requested to contact the Government Tenders Directorate, at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing to receive tenders documents starting from (14/8/1993) and in accordance with the following terms:

- Scope of work:
This project implies provision and installation of:
- One main digital switch in Tla'Al-Ali area with an initial capacity of 25,000 lines
- Three small switching nodes in the neighbouring suburbs (Dabooq, Bader & Bassah) with total initial capacity of 3,000 lines
- Digital transmission equipment
- Local Line plant for Tla'Al-Ali area
- Supply only of local line plant materials for Dabooq, Bader & Bassah.
- The project will be implemented, on one project basis, by one main contractor.
- The project does not have financing sources. Therefore, tenderers have to submit financial offers covering all costs of the project. Tenders which are not including financial offers will be rejected.
- The main contractor shall use local sub-contractors to implement the installation of the local plants and the civil works of towers.
- Price of one copy of the tender documents, JD1,000, non-refundable.
- Last date for purchasing the tender is Oct. 30, 1993.
- Offers shall be submitted to the Government Directorate before 1300 hours local time, on Saturday Nov. 13, 1993.

Chairman, General Tender Committee
Government Tenders Directorate
Eng. Basheer Al Jaghbeer



Mobile artillery pieces rumble along the Moscow River during a Victory Day parade in Moscow (file photo)

Japan grapples with dollar approaching one hundred yen

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese currency's advance to the symbolic level of 100 yen to the dollar is forcing companies to adjust and consumers to demand some of the benefits as the government calls on other countries to intervene.

In a foreign exchange market dominated by speculations, the dollar fell below 102 yen for the first time ever Friday, after dropping below 103 yen Thursday. It dipped to a new all-time low of 101.80 before finishing the week at 102.10.

The dollar's slide towards 100 yen is already a reality for tourists as this is the rate now being charged at airports, major hotels and duty-free shops.

Alarmed by the dangers the yen's appreciation poses for the Japanese economy's already fragile recovery, the Bank of Japan is intervening daily in the market, though with little success.

On Friday Finance Minister Hironaka Fujii repeated Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's call the previous day for joint intervention by Group of Seven countries to stop speculation in the market.

A special meeting of Japanese ministers responsible for economic policy has been set for next Thursday. Mr. Fujii told a news conference: "We will contact other nations and respond timely and appropriately."

But traders are betting that Japan's partners will not respond to any requests, since they view the Japanese currency's strength as a means of reducing Japan's enormous external surpluses over the long term.

Indeed, as a result of a further increase in Japan's surpluses, together with the turmoil in the European Monetary System, the yen this week has become a new target for speculators.

Manase Kudota, director of the Economic Planning Agency, warned Friday that the latest surge could "shock" the Japanese economy whose exports will become increasingly expensive in the global market place.

And unlike the last time the yen appreciated sharply, in 1986 and 1987, Japanese companies cannot depend on the domestic market to offset falling sales overseas, as Japanese demand is stagnant.

Furthermore, after three years of declining profits, companies have much less money to spend on moving their production to Asia or anywhere elsewhere.

Toyota Motor Corp. recently said it loses six billion yen (\$58 million) every time the dollar dips one yen. Analysts are therefore predicting that carmakers and consumer electronics manufacturers will step up exports from their factories overseas, as Toyota and Bridgestone Corp. have already announced.

Other sectors such as steel, chemicals and petrochemicals should speed up the painful process of restructuring to boost productivity in Japan.

In Asia, China could be the main focus of a new wave of Japanese direct investment over-



Money dealers are busy in the afternoon trade in the Tokyo foreign exchange market while an indicator shows 101.80 yen (AFP photo)

seas. But it will be on a much smaller scale than in the 1980's, according to Khang Chi Hung, an economist at Nomura Research Institute.

Just this week, Ricoh announced that it is to build another factory in China, to manufacture fax machines in Shanghai.

Japanese consumers, however, aim to take advantage of the yen's strength which is pushing down the price of imported goods.

"Now is the time to capitalise on the advantages of the favourable exchange rate... to pass on the strong yen's benefits to the consumer," Japan's leading newspaper, the Yomiuri Shimbun, declared Friday.

Three quarters of Japan's

annual imports of \$230 billion are dollar-denominated and, the Yomiuri said, the U.S. currency's slide has enabled Japan to reap a windfall of three trillion yen (\$39 billion) a year.

"The problem is whether the massive windfall will remain — numbers on a calculator or whether the windfall can be recycled into better corporate performance and improvements in people's lifestyles," the newspaper said.

The Yomiuri urged electricity companies, which are paying less for their imported oil, to lower their charges. But a government survey released Thursday showed that more than half of the population has yet to see the benefits of a stronger currency.

India has no plans to open up insurance sector

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Indian government has no immediate plans to open up the country to foreign insurance companies, Finance Minister Manmohan Singh told parliament.

The United States has demanded that India open up its huge market to foreign insurers, saying absence of such access amounted to an unfair trade practice.

It is also one of the conditions set by former GATT director general Arthur Dunkel's compromise plan to save the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations.

Mr. Singh said the government was not considering any proposal to allow in foreign insurance firms.

An expert committee studying insurance sector reforms is "going into all these aspects" and it was premature for the government to comment on it before it submitted its findings, he said.

Pressed by opposition members for a categorical assurance that foreign insurers would not be allowed to enter India, the minister said: "The interests of the country will be effectively safeguarded."

Debts could hinder support of French franc

PARIS (R) — The French franc had its worst day Friday since European currencies were effectively floated two weeks ago and economists said huge debts run up in last month's market turmoil could hamper efforts to prop it up.

The French currency fell to its lowest level against the German mark since Aug. 2, when European Community (EC) states were forced by market pressure to widen fluctuation bands within the EC's exchange rate mechanism (ERM) to 15 per cent from 2.25.

It touched 3.5470 per mark, down from 3.5145 on Thursday and 3.4 per cent below its former floor in the EC currency grid.

Traders said the decline was prompted by Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, who said he was sticking to a austere economic policy and was in no hurry to cut interest rates.

The French central bank's need to repay its debts of around \$50 billion could now add to the pressure on the franc.

Foreign investors have sent French stocks and bonds to record highs in the hope that Mr. Balladur would use his new freedom to act independently of high German interest rates to slash French rates and get the economy out of recession.

Some economists say the slow pace of monetary easing risks

driving these investors back out of France, hurting the franc.

One said: "If this keeps up, the franc could even test its new (ERM) floor. The Bank (of France) doesn't have much left to defend it."

But another said such a fall — another 10 per cent — was scarcely credible as the French economy is reasonably healthy.

Economists said the \$50 billion or so that the Bank of France might have borrowed from the German and other central banks in its vain bid to hold the franc to its former ERM parity would not have a big impact on the economy.

"The only real problem it creates is for the franc. The Bank of France has to sell a lot of francs to get the foreign currency it needs to repay its loans. And it's clear it has very few resources left to support the franc if it starts falling faster," said one French economist.

"In terms of wider problems for the financial system or the real economy, there's no real effect, although politically it won't look too good for the government once people get back from holiday," another economist said.

The central bank's dilemma is deciding whether higher or lower interest rates will be best to prop up the franc over the next few weeks as it goes about rebuilding the reserves it spent in interven-

tion. This also involves selling francs.

Bank of France data suggests that it might have spent as much as 330 billion francs (\$55 billion) buying francs in July, including about 190 billion francs (\$31 billion) on one day alone — "Black Friday," July 30.

Technically that means the bank now has "negative reserves" as it only had about 155 billion francs (\$26 billion) on its books before the crisis. Economists said it probably borrowed virtually all of what it needed — mostly in marks from Germany's Bundesbank.

Three hundred billion francs represents about 15 per cent of France's national debt but economists said the central bank's borrowings would not show up in the government's accounts as it should be repaid within a few months.

Some bankers suggested that France might sell a bond issue in marks or another currency to raise cash to repay the debts.

But the French treasury has denied that it is planning to do so and economists said it made little sense politically.

Nor is the Bank of France likely to be selling gold reserves to raise cash. Nothing bullion market rumours that it was doing so, one economist said: "The Bank of France doesn't even think about its gold. It's history."

Turmoil as South Korea bans false name trading

SEOUL (R) — Panicky South Korean investors dumped stocks and implored brokers to bend the new rules Friday as a shock ban on false-name financial transactions went into force.

The bourse, closed in the morning on presidential orders, opened at 2.10 p.m. (0510 GMT) for the two-hour afternoon session and promptly tumbled 22.79 points to 703.15.

"I'm in real trouble. What am I going to do?" said a 22-year-old false name account holder working for a foreign firm. "It sucks."

President Kim Young-Sam took the nation by surprise Thursday night by invoking an emergency order on national television banning the widespread use of "false name" accounts.

The ban is part of Mr. Kim's no-holds-barred drive against corruption, influence peddling and tax evasion launched when he took office in February.

"Let me assure those of you who are sincere and honest lives that a system will do you no harm whatsoever," Mr. Kim said in his address to the nation.

Brokers said anxious investors had blocked the phone lines with requests to release their money without informing the authorities.

"We obviously cannot break the law," said a broker at a domestic house.

Finance Minister Hong Jae-Hyung ordered all banks, financial institutions and the stock market to remain shut Friday morning. There was no rush

when the doors opened.

Bank clerks said they spent the morning receiving instruction on identifying account-holders.

Financial institutions reopened at 2 p.m. (0500 GMT) and remained open until 8 p.m. (1100 GMT).

Stocks plunged from the opening bell of the afternoon session. A daily-limit down rule, by which trading is halted if prices move more than a preset limit, prevents the index falling any more than 34.9 points, an exchange official said.

"Investors are selling relentlessly," said Dennis Song at Coryo Securities. No advances were recorded in the first 20 minutes despite government efforts to cushion the blow by waiving all capital gains taxes on stock market profits until 1997.

Until now any South Korean could walk into a bank or brokerage and open an account in any name whatsoever.

It was virtually impossible for tax authorities or anti-corruption investigators to trace ill-gotten gains.

From Friday, all customers were required to identify themselves before gaining access to money in their accounts.

Banks and institutions who permit an account holder to make withdrawals without providing proper identification face a fine of up to 500 million won (\$620,000).

Up to 60 per cent of funds held in bank and securities house accounts by those who do not

identify themselves within two months can be confiscated.

A 96.75 per cent tax will be levied on any interest income or dividends that accrue.

Brokers and traders are barred by law from playing the markets and so many, if not most, had opened accounts under pseudonyms, said one who declined to be identified.

"I'm worried, but then so are most brokers. We weren't prepared for this sudden news," said a local broker.

The president had frequently said he planned to outlaw false name transactions since taking power in February, part of his no-holds crusade against corruption.

The financial markets, however, had banked on Mr. Kim delaying the measure until the sluggish economy recovered and had confidently predicted no action until the middle of next year.

Anyone who withdraws sums in excess of 30 million won (\$37,000) from a bank account in cash in the next two months will be reported to the tax authorities.

Tax authorities will watch those who remit more than \$3,000 overseas.

Mr. Kim's anti-graft campaign has cost scores of senior officials, including powerful top generals and politicians, their jobs, and in some cases, their liberty.

South Koreans say corruption, particularly in high places, has fallen off dramatically but remains a dark fact of life; particularly at petty levels.

Kuwait urged to draft longer-term budget

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An economic adviser to the Kuwait parliament has urged the oil-rich Gulf state to draft its annual budget as part of a long-term financial programme to tackle the huge deficit caused by the Iraqi invasion.

Jassim Al Saadun, a highly respected economic analyst, said the parliament's financial and economic committee was still striving to cut the deficit, which was projected at around two billion Kuwaiti dinars (\$3.6 billion) in fiscal 1993-1994.

"The budget does not represent the right instrument to serve the financial policy and reflect the financial situation of the country during the year when it is issued," Sheikh Saadun said in the report, published in the United Arab Emirates daily Al Khaleej.

He said the budget should not be approved unless it contains detailed classifications of spending on each sector, the real costs of goods and services and studies on production efficiency.

"The budget should also be part of a longer financial programme of between three and five years in order to identify the real accumulating deficit and ways to tackle it as well as adopting right policies," he said.

Kuwait's budget began to suffer from a large deficit after the 1990 Iraqi invasion, which forced it to sell more than half its overseas assets to finance reconstruction and pay liberation costs.

Global airline travel to climb through '95, industry group says

MONTREAL (AFP) — Airline travel on carriers worldwide will grow 5.9 per cent in 1993, 6.9 per cent in 1994 and 7.3 per cent in 1995, according to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

Travel likely will be heaviest in the Asia-Pacific region but will drop slightly in Europe because of economic difficulties there, according to forecasts released here by the ICAO.

Passengers flying on airlines based in the ICAO's 180 member states travelled a combined 1.95 billion passenger-kilometres (1.2 billion miles) in 1992 and should travel 2.37 billion passenger-kilometres (1.4 billion miles) by 1995, the ICAO said.

The number of passengers will jump by 9.3 per cent for the Asia-Pacific region in 1993, 10.4 per cent in 1994 and 10.6 per cent in 1995 and 10.6 per cent in 1995. In Europe, the number of passengers will climb by 5.9 per cent, 7.1 per cent and 7.9 per cent over the same periods respectively.

In the Caribbean and Latin America, the number of passengers will climb by 5.9 per cent in 1993, 7.1 per cent for 1994 and 7.9 per cent for 1995 compared to 6.1 per cent, 6.6 per cent and seven per cent for North America.

Greek deputies approve sale of phone company

ATHENS (R) — The Greek parliament passed a crucial bill Thursday clearing the way for the partial sale of the Greek Telecommunications Organisation (OTE), the government's most ambitious privatisation project.

The bill was approved by 51 votes to 47 after weeks of strife within the ruling conservative party and a storm of protest from opposition parties and labour unions.

The government has a single-seat majority in parliament and National Economy Minister Stephanos Manos was forced to make last-minute changes in the bill to persuade dissidents in the conservative camp not to vote it down.

In the event, all 50 conservative deputies voted for the bill along with an independent Muslim deputy. Another independent Muslim abstained.

The bill allows the sale of 35 per cent of OTE's shares and its management to an international operator. Another 10 per cent will be floated on the Athens Bourse and four per cent will be offered free to the company's employees and pensioners.

The state will control the remaining 51 per cent of the shares. The state will control the remaining 51 per cent of the shares.

Objections to the bill focused mainly on the decision to grant management rights to a core investor. The main opposition Socialist Party accused the government of selling off national wealth.

In an effort to soften the opposition within his own ranks, Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis had said the government will control telephone charges and the state will hold a 65 majority on OTE's board of directors.

Mr. Manos went further Thursday, giving the board more power to decide on major policy decisions.

The General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), the country's biggest union with almost one million members, held a 24-hour strike Thursday, protesting against OTE's sale.

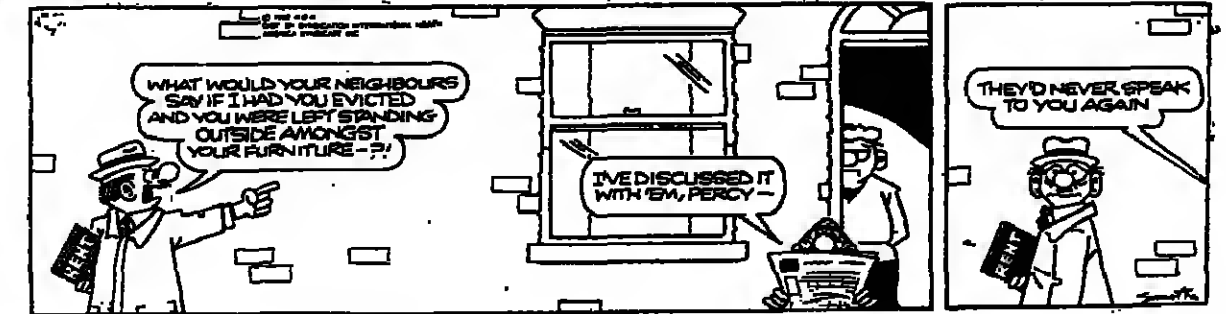
The strike closed public banks and offices and created problems in transport, telecommunications, the power supply and the mail.

Six international companies have expressed interest in winning the management stake in OTE and their bids are expected in September.

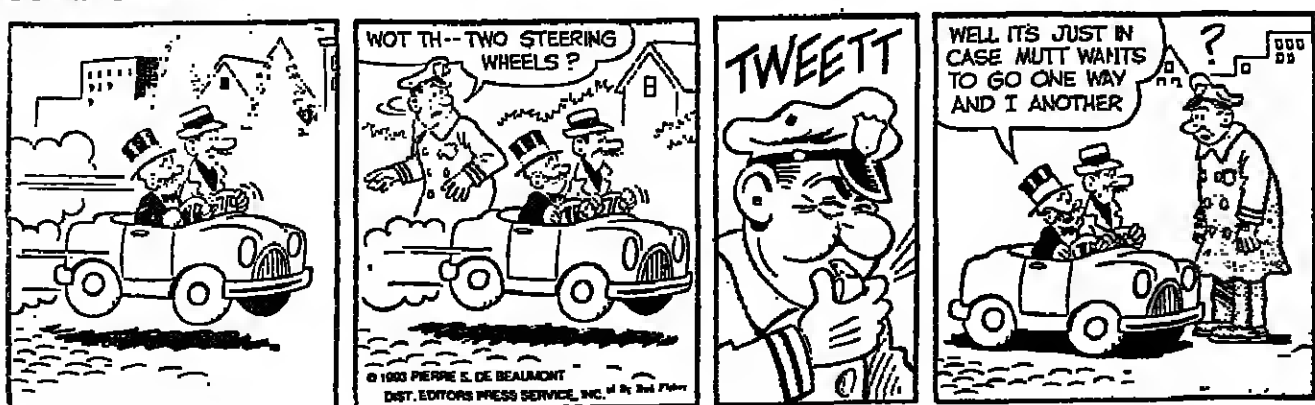
Peanuts



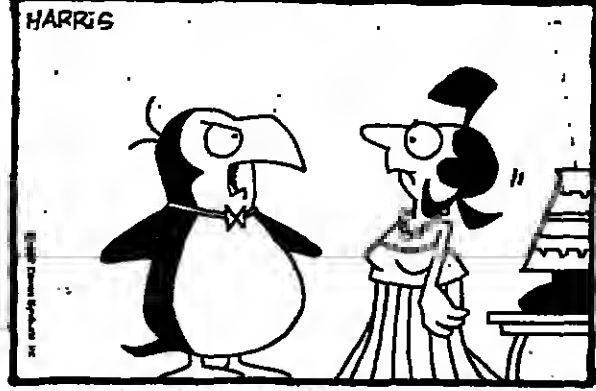
Andy Capp



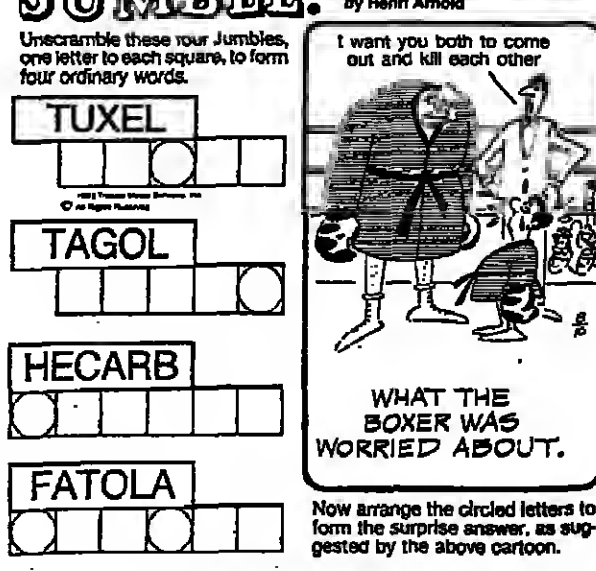
Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF



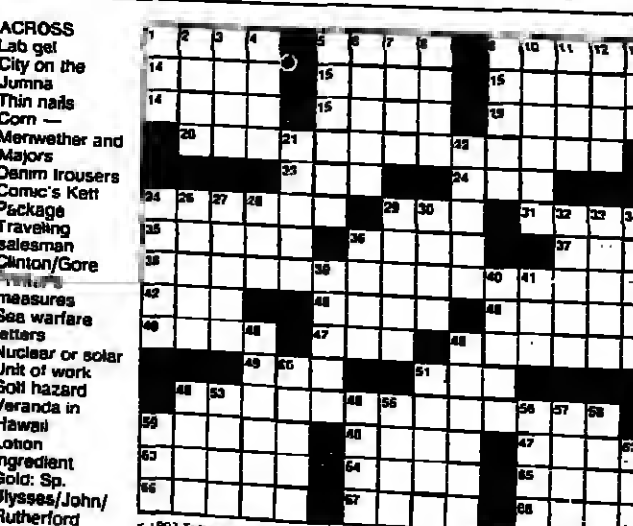
JUMBLE



Print answer here:
(Answers tomorrow)
Yesterday's Jumbles: KNEEL FLAME ANSWER BUTTON
Answer: You might be this when your apartment costs more than you can afford—FLAT BROKE

Horoscope not received

THE Daily Crossword by Eugene Puffenberger



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:
ACROSS: 1. CRASH 2. RAIN 3. BANG 4. CRASH 5. CRASH 6. CRASH 7. CRASH 8. CRASH 9. CRASH 10. CRASH 11. CRASH 12. CRASH 13. CRASH 14. CRASH 15. CRASH 16. CRASH 17. CRASH 18. CRASH 19. CRASH 20. CRASH 21. CRASH 22. CRASH 23. CRASH 24. CRASH 25. CRASH 26. CRASH 27. CRASH 28. CRASH 29. CRASH 30. CRASH 31. CRASH 32. CRASH 33. CRASH 34. CRASH 35. CRASH 36. CRASH 37. CRASH 38. CRASH 39. CRASH 40. CRASH 41. CRASH 42. CRASH 43. CRASH 44. CRASH 45. CRASH 46. CRASH 47. CRASH 48. CRASH 49. CRASH 50. CRASH 51. CRASH 52. CRASH 53. CRASH 54. CRASH 55. CRASH 56. CRASH 57. CRASH 58. CRASH 59. CRASH 60. CRASH 61. CRASH 62. CRASH 63. CRASH 64. CRASH 65. CRASH 66. CRASH 67. CRASH 68. CRASH
DOWN: 1. CRASH 2. CRASH 3. CRASH 4. CRASH 5. CRASH 6. CRASH 7. CRASH 8. CRASH 9. CRASH 10. CRASH 11. CRASH 12. CRASH 13. CRASH 14. CRASH 15. CRASH 16. CRASH 17. CRASH 18. CRASH 19. CRASH 20. CRASH 21. CRASH 22. CRASH 23. CRASH 24. CRASH 25. CRASH 26. CRASH 27. CRASH 28. CRASH 29. CRASH 30. CRASH 31. CRASH 32. CRASH 33. CRASH 34. CRASH 35. CRASH 36. CRASH 37. CRASH 38. CRASH 39. CRASH 40. CRASH 41. CRASH 42. CRASH 43. CRASH 44. CRASH 45. CRASH 46. CRASH 47. CRASH 48. CRASH 49. CRASH 50. CRASH 51. CRASH 52. CRASH 53. CRASH 54. CRASH 55. CRASH 56. CRASH 57. CRASH 58. CRASH 59. CRASH 60. CRASH 61. CRASH 62. CRASH 63. CRASH 64. CRASH 65. CRASH 66. CRASH 67. CRASH 68. CRASH

U.N. to check Bosnian Serb lines

Airlift of severely wounded to start soon

SARAJEVO (R) — A U.N. general headed for a strategic mission above Sarajevo Friday to wait along Bosnian Serb forces' lines to settle a dispute over their withdrawal which is holding peace talks in Geneva.

"We're in a very sensitive period," said Commander Barry Frewer, the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) spokesman in the besieged Bosnian capital.

"The longer this process is held up, the greater the possibility of further mistrust and manipulation could creep in."

As British Brigadier Vere Frewer was about to start his mission, an international operation to airlift wounded civilians out of Sarajevo got under way. A British medical team arrived from Britain to assess patients and to evacuate Sunday.

Frewer has dubbed the mission "Operation Irma," as the British has been the mercy flight to evacuate five-year-old Hadzimiracovic, gravely wounded by a Serb mortar and dying for lack of adequate medical facilities.

Frewer said Gen. Hayes, chief of staff of the UNPROFOR in Bosnia, would visit the Bosnian Serb army high command before walking the lines on Mount Igman.

The information Gen. Hayes will be sent to Geneva, where Bosnia's Muslim President Ali Izetbegovic is boycotting U.N. peace negotiations until the promised Serb withdrawal is completed to his satisfaction.

MATO has warned the Bosnian Serbs they could face air strikes if they end their stranglehold on Sarajevo.

The aim today is to get an agreement on the boundary withdrawal lines. It has been a point of contention," Maj. Frewer told Reuters.

Both the Bosnian Serb and Muslim-led governments had indicated they were going through troop rotations, but were not reinforcing positions.



2 Bosnian Serb soldiers near the Bosnian town of Doboj practice with STELLA (Arrow) shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles during a drill (AFP photo)

"You'll appreciate the situation is tense, but there is no change in the military situation up there. The situation is stable," Maj. Frewer said. He estimated the Serbs had pulled around 800 men off the mountain but still had about 1,000 there.

"Once (the boundary line) is defined and the regime for continuing the withdrawal process continues, we hope in a matter of days we will see the continued withdrawal of Serb forces," he added.

Serb forces have withdrawn from the central area of Mount Igman, which they captured despite a July 30 ceasefire agreement, but are still deployed along a disputed line they say follows their positions before the truce.

Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic told Reuters Television Thursday his forces would leave all disputed positions on the mountain as soon as the U.N. inspection defined exactly where they were allowed to be.

Peter Kessler, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR), said the airlift of wounded children and adult civilians out of Sarajevo would probably begin Sunday.

A U.N. medical team had contacted all 41 cases on its most urgent list of those approved for evacuation. Two patients had declined the offer of treatment abroad, preferring to remain in the city, he said.

One 29-year-old man who decided to stay "really felt badly about leaving his mother, leaving his extended family, his property and the graves of close relatives," Mr. Kessler said.

"So we are selecting other patients who are on the top of the priority list."

The evacuees are to be flown out in British Air Force Hercules transports of the type which regularly lift food and other aid into Sarajevo. They will be taken to Ancona in Italy for transfer by air ambulance to Britain, Sweden and Ireland.

Preparations for the airlift advanced Friday with the arrival of a British Air Force doctor and a

British army nurse.

But the doctor, wing-commander Andy Mitchell, said there were children in urgent need of treatment who were not included on the list of those to be airlifted out.

"I've been round the paediatric ward here and I've seen children whom I feel would benefit from immediate evacuation and treatment in Britain," Commander Mitchell said after a visit to Sarajevo's Kosevo Hospital.

Meanwhile, Serbia has asked the International Court of Justice to order the Bosnian government to prevent genocide against ethnic Serbs in Bosnia, the U.N. court said Friday.

Serbia said it would present evidence to prove the Bosnian authorities were responsible for acts of genocide.

"The government of the so-called Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina should immediately take all measures within its power to prevent commission of the crime of genocide against the Serb ethnic group," Serbia said.

Yeltsin warns regions against breakaway designs

PETROZAVODSK, Russia (R) — President Boris Yeltsin cracked down on separatist stirrings in Russia Friday, telling regional leaders he would never allow any territories to leave the Russian Federation.

The heads of semi-autonomous republics and representatives of regions in the federation effectively declined Mr. Yeltsin's invitation to set up a new seat of power in Russia. But they agreed to form a Federation Council as a consultative body.

Mr. Yeltsin, canvassing vital provincial support for his battle against the country's conservative parliament, said he sought a fair distribution of power between Moscow and the provinces. But he made clear there were strict limits to their freedom.

"I have to say that if any republics or regions really have hopes of leaving Russia, then they are deeply mistaken. Russia will remain a unified force."

Mr. Yeltsin's press spokesman, Vyacheslav Kostikov, commented after the speech: "The Russian Federation is not a piece of Swiss cheese. It must not be allowed to disintegrate."

Mr. Yeltsin said there were two ways of keeping Russia together — or, if democracy collapsed, "it could be done by naked force, by a dictatorship."

Mr. Yeltsin has warned before of the dangers of separatism in

radical semi-autonomous republics such as Tatarstan, which has declared itself a sovereign state in association with Russia.

But Mr. Yeltsin's comments to a meeting of leaders of Russia's semi-autonomous republics and regional administrations in the northern town of Petrozavodsk marked the first time he had spoken out directly that no republic would be allowed to leave.

The only territory absent from the meeting was the southern Republic of Chechnya which has unilaterally declared full independence of Russia.

Differences between the semi-autonomous republics, based on ethnic minorities, and the regions, the next rung down in the federal power structure, threaten to foil Mr. Yeltsin's attempts to forge a new constitution for Russia.

Some fear the disputes could seriously undermine the federation, just as similar disputes over taxation, resources and political powers led to the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Mr. Yeltsin, in an apparent challenge to the conservative parliament, proposed creating a new seat of power, a Federation Council, uniting leaders from regional administrations.

"This would not be just some kind of assembly. It would be a legitimate organ of power," Mr. Yeltsin said.

He did not make clear if it should have lawmaking powers or develop into a "parallel parliament". The proposal, he said, had first been backed by the regions in March but was blocked by the legislature.

"Perhaps we should renew these signatures (of support) now and resolve the question of forming a Federation Council by means of a presidential decree," Mr. Yeltsin said.

But official documents of the meeting the regional leaders said the council should have only consultative powers. The decision, however, was not an outright defeat for Mr. Yeltsin.

Set up as a consultative body, Kremlin officials believe the council could develop and form the basis of one of two parliamentary chambers under a new constitution.

It would include two representatives from each of 88 territories.

Mr. Yeltsin called the Petrozavodsk meeting in an effort to salvage his plans for adopting a new constitution to replace the basic law inherited from the Soviet era.

But if the plans for a new constitution fail, autumn elections could become Mr. Yeltsin's chief weapon against the legislature. Mr. Yeltsin said in a combative speech Thursday he would bring about polls even if parliament resisted his demand.

Over 100 die in Bangkok hotel collapse

BANGKOK (R) — More than 100 people are believed to have been killed when a hotel collapsed in north central Thailand Friday, police and rescue workers said.

An official at a private emergency foundation said 24 bodies had been retrieved from the site of the Royal Plaza Hotel in Nakbon Ratchasima, 250 kilometres northeast of Bangkok.

"There are so many dead bodies we can see, but we are concentrating our efforts on helping the living," police Sergeant Sawat Pongsawan told Reuters.

More than 200 teachers were attending a seminar at the hotel when it collapsed, officials said.

The building was a two-storey structure to which four additional storeys had been added, officials

said. An additional floor was being put on when the building collapsed.

"There were people on each floor when it happened and they are now either trapped or buried in debris," said Pornchai Chitsuwansin, a spokesman for the Ruam Katanyu Foundation.

"The gas smell and the fear of triggering further collapse have slowed rescue workers as they try to do their job," he said.

"We expect the death toll to rise, definitely past the 100 figures tonight," he said. "There are so many people trapped in what is reduced to a 1 1/2 storey structure from an original seven-storey building."

More than 200 injured people were taken to one hospital, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Other hospitals were also treating the injured.

Police estimates of the number of people trapped ranged up to 500.

Police said the hotel collapsed as a staff were preparing lunch for teachers and school administrators attending the seminar.

More than 60 employees of the Shell Oil Company were also attending a meeting in the hotel. Forty others were attending a third meeting.

Some of the guests in the hotel were foreigners, rescuers said, even though Nakbon Ratchasima is off the beaten track for tourists.

Medical emergency rooms were set up in tents around the hotel to deal with casualties.

"All cranes in the area are being used to remove debris," a senior policeman said.

Pope delivers anti-abortion message in U.S.

DENVER, Colorado (R) — Pope John Paul II, arriving in the United States for his first meeting with President Bill Clinton, issued a strong reaffirmation of the Roman Catholic Church's anti-abortion stance.

"If you want equal justice for all and true freedom and lasting peace, then, America, defend life," the Pontiff said in Denver Thursday in an exchange of greetings with Mr. Clinton.

The words, while not explicitly mentioning abortion, were a clear criticism of liberal U.S. policies on the question.

On Thursday night 90,000 young people gave the Pope a thunderous welcome at a rally for the Roman Catholic Church's World Youth Day, the reason for his third full-scale trip to the United States.

The airport exchange was the first face-to-face meeting between the highly conservative 73-year-old Pontiff and the president who supports the right of women to choose abortion.

Mr. Clinton, in a short statement after Pope John Paul's arrival from Mexico, tried to shift the stage to the international arena and the Pontiff's role in combating communism.

"We know that you were the force to light the spark of freedom over communism in your native Poland," Mr. Clinton said, referring to the Pope's support for Solidarity, the Polish free trade union.

But the Pope returned to the issue of abortion after the two men emerged from a closed-door 45-minute meeting at Regis University, a Jesuit institution.

"The inalienable dignity of every human being and the rights which flow from that dignity — in the first place, the right to life and the defence of life — as well as the well-being and full human development of individuals and peoples, are at the heart of the church's message and action in the world," the Pope said in a short statement.

Mr. Clinton's support of abortion rights helped him win election as president last year.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers said the Pope's remarks were no surprise. "I think he tried to make his point without being confrontational. It's what we expected."

"The president knows the Pope's views on this. It doesn't come as any surprise."

NEWS IN BRIEF

New cholera strain sweeps Bangladesh

LONDON (AP) — Researchers say a new strain of cholera that formerly occurred only sporadically is sweeping Bangladesh and eastern India and is set to spread and kill many people throughout South East Asia. "This strain seems to have pandemic potential. It is important that other countries in South East Asia are aware of the strain's potential to cause severe morbidity and mortality," researchers in Bangladesh reported in the Lancet, a British medical journal. Two U.S. researchers, David L. Swerdlow and Allen A. Rices, also writing in the Aug. 14 issue of the journal available Friday, went further and warned: "The epidemic potential of the new strain and the lack of immunity to it should alert ministries of health throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America: these epidemics could mark the beginning of the eighth cholera pandemic."

2 U.K. towns put on bomb alert

LONDON (R) — Police in Brighton said they had evacuated stores and the town's beaches and pier Friday after a coded warning that the IRA had planted firebombs in the southern English resort. Earlier fires caused by incendiary devices broke out in a furniture store, a bookshop and clothes shops in Bournemouth, a resort west of Brighton. Police later reported a small explosion which damaged the town's pier. No one claimed responsibility for the Bournemouth attacks. But police in Brighton said they had received a warning, purporting to come from the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which said bombs had been planted on beaches and in shops. "We consider the call to be authentic," Rodney Lynd, assistant police chief in Brighton, told reporters. A police spokesman said four Brighton chain stores, which were targets in Bournemouth, had been cleared as had the town's famous Palace Pier. No devices have yet been found, he said.

New Belgian King goes on vacation

NICE, France (AP) — Newly crowned King Albert II of Belgium still drove his own car after arriving by plane on a Riviera vacation, police said Friday. Belgium's consul from Nice greeted the king and his wife Paola as they arrived Thursday night aboard a Belgian army Mystere 20 jet, and secret service agents accompanied the entourage. King Albert, who assumed the throne Monday in grand ceremony, still took the wheel of his car as they drove off to the king's villa in Chateauvill-Grasse, a mountain village 27 kilometres west of Nice. The royal couple own "Les Romarins," a property overlooking the Bay of Antibes that includes a house and a pool, where they have spent a few weeks for the past five years. Police said King Albert and his wife were to spend several days in the Riviera, but the Belgian consulate said it did not know the length of the stay.

3 die in U.K. helicopter crash

LONDON (R) — Three young cadets were killed when a Royal Air Force helicopter with seven people on board crashed into a lake in Wales Thursday during a training flight, police said. Four people were rescued and airlifted to hospital but two boys and one girl were trapped inside as the helicopter sank to the bottom of the lake. Witnesses said the yellow Wessex helicopter went into a spiral and plunged into the centre of Llyn Padarn, a lake on the edge of the popular Snowdonian holiday town of Llanberis.

U.N. to send aid to Liberians

ABIDJAN (R) — The United Nations said it would truck urgently-needed food supplies across Liberia's former civil war battle lines to areas where at least 250,000 people are threatened with starvation. The medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said in Brussels it too would send food into the north and centre of the country where the Red Cross says hundreds of children are dying every week. The shipments will be the first to cross Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) rebel lines. The U.N. in Monrovia said its vehicles would leave the Liberian capital Friday, carrying food about 50 miles (80 kilometres) to the area north of Kakata, until last month the front line in the country's three-and-a-half year civil war.

Support for new Japanese premier hits 83% — poll

TOKYO (R) — Japan's new prime minister, a reformer promising to alter politics radically, has charmed the nation, winning a record high 83.4 per cent rating in the latest media survey released Friday.

With the backing of more than eight out of 10 Japanese, Morihiro Hosokawa enjoys unprecedented support for a new leader beginning office, said the latest poll conducted jointly by Fuji Television and the daily Sankei Shimbun.

In spite of Mr. Hosokawa's wide support, few voters believed that his coalition government would endure. Over 55 per cent predicted it would last one year while about one third of those polled said it would be short-lived.

Aspin said to push for more defence spending

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Defence Secretary Les Aspin has proposed spending about \$20 billion more on military spending over the next five years than President Bill Clinton has called for, the Washington Post reported Friday.

The Post said Mr. Aspin presented the plan to administration officials last week. A Pentagon spokesman said he had no knowledge of the report.

Mr. Clinton has proposed spending \$1.2 trillion for defence over the next five years.

According to the Post, which cited unnamed military officials, Mr. Aspin's proposal for the extra spending is based on his assessment of national security needs.

His recommendations include a force of 11 aircraft carriers with one in reserve, two fewer than now in service, the Post said.

The newspaper said he also wanted to maintain 45 to 55 nuclear-powered submarines, compared with 60 now, 10 active and six reserve army divisions, four fewer than now, and 20 air force wings, compared with the current 28.

Military spending must be approved by Congress.

Meanwhile Marine Commandant Carl Mundy acknowledged Thursday he "blindsided" President Bill Clinton with his plan, since slapped down, to ban married recruits after 1995 but said it was undertaken with good motives.

"I blindsided him on this," the general said at a Pentagon briefing. "And it's not one of my prouder moments in history. Here... I'll try not to do it again."

Gen. Mundy issued an order last week for the Marines to stop recruiting married men and women after Sept. 30, 1995, and to discourage early marriages of people already in the corps because of the strain Marine life puts on early marriages.

The order did not become widely known until Wednesday afternoon and Mr. Aspin took the extraordinary step of publicly reversing it Wednesday night.

Pentagon spokesman Captain Mike Doubleday said Mr. Aspin "was surprised" when he heard about Gen. Mundy's policy late Wednesday. "He felt this was a little arbitrary."

Mr. Aspin issued a statement praising Gen. Mundy's focus on the effect of marriage problems on military readiness but said he ordered Gen. Mundy's plan retracted pending review of the problem across the entire military.

Gen. Mundy said Mr. Aspin had said "nothing but positive things" to him about the controversy Thursday and had expressed a willingness to work with him on the marriage problem.

"We... very candidly did not foresee that the focus would be so much on the five per cent who enlist who are married," Gen. Mundy said.

"My focus was really on the

counselling end of (the plan). My focus was on attempting to develop a programme that would help us better to deal with this," he told reporters.

He said the entire policy, including the marriage counselling, was on hold pending Mr. Aspin's review.

Representative Patricia Schroeder attacked Gen. Mundy's plan.

"Even the Pope allows his Swiss Guards to be married," the Colorado Democrat said. "The Marines have always been the least family-friendly."

Another critic said Gen. Mundy's marriage counselling order made sense but he should have known the impact his order would have when Mr. Clinton and Mr. Aspin are promoting women, gay rights and families in the military.

"It was like throwing a hand grenade into the middle of this administration," author and former air force officer Martin Binkley said. "He should have known that."

Clinton appoints new military chief

President Clinton has named the commander of allied forces in Europe, General John Shalikashvili, to become chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

When confirmed by the Senate, Gen. Shalikashvili will succeed General Colin Powell as the nation's highest ranking military

officer. Gen. Powell is retiring as of Sept. 30.

Mr. Clinton, in a surprise Rose Garden announcement, said Gen. Shalikashvili, the grandson of a general in the czar's Russian army, "is a shining symbol of what is best about the United States and best about our armed services."

Gen. Shalikashvili, who was born in Warsaw, Poland, came to the United States at the age of 16, learned to speak English from watching John Wayne movies, was drafted into the army and rose through the ranks to four-star general.

Gen. Shalikashvili's father, once an officer in the Georgian army, fled from Warsaw with his eight-year-old son just ahead of the advancing Soviet armies in 1944. As Mr. Clinton noted, the general and his family were "caught in a crossfire of the kind of national and ethnic rivalries that now trouble so much of our world."

"I selected him," Mr. Clinton said, "because I believe he has the ability and to win any military action our nation might ask of him. Above all, I am confident that in every instance, he will give me his absolutely candid and professional military advice." The president called Gen. Shalikashvili "a soldier's soldier" who is "superbly well-qualified" for his new post.

Mother tells girl to kill self for exam failure

HONG KONG (R) — A Hong Kong mother has made a public apology after her daughter followed her advice and tried to kill herself because of disappointing examination results. The 19-year-old girl took an overdose of painkillers after scoring narrowly below the marks she needed in Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) results released this week, the South China Morning Post said Friday. "I admit it is all my fault," penitent mother Chu Wai-fai said. "I was as her daughter Irene recovered in hospital. 'I went as far as to tell her to jump off the Bank of China building if she got poor results.' The annual release of HKCEE results, vital to students' futures, is a time of triumph or despair for thousands of students in the territory, where a state of teenage suicides in recent years has been blamed on intense parental pressure. Newspapers this week devoted headlines to one unusually carefree girl who insisted she was happy despite scoring bottom grades in all subjects, saying her example should dissuade heartbroken teenagers from thoughts of killing themselves. 'I hope all the other parents can learn a lesson from me and not put too much pressure on their children, as it will be too late if they commit suicide,' the Post quoted Irene's mother as saying.

Astronaut knocks cosmic cuisine

ZVYOZDNY GORODOK, Russia (R) — To the catalogue of financial and political woes facing Russia's space programme, Astronaut Alexander Poleshchuk added a new moan Thursday — the standard of cosmic cuisine. "We had enough to eat, but the rations could have been better," Poleshchuk, who recently returned from six months in space, told reporters. "The food's got worse... new financial conditions mean supplies are worse than in the past, so there are problems with provisions," he lamented.

Driver swears at Princess Diana

LONDON (R) — A British van driver swore at Princess Diana and called her a "silly cow" after she forced him to screech to a halt to avoid hitting her, the Daily Star newspaper reported Friday. Princess Diana, estranged wife of heir to the throne Prince Charles, was leaving a hairdresser in London's fashionable Mayfair Thursday when she spotted a waiting photographer. The paper said Princess Diana ran into the road to avoid him and almost collided with a van. The furious driver swore before leaping out of his window to shout: "Get out of the road, you silly cow." Princess Diana yelled back before leaping into her car.

Court fines Gorbachev 3 cents

MOSCOW (R) — A Russian court fined former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev 30 rubles (three U.S. cents) for failing to appear to answer libel charges levelled by the mayor of Moscow. The Postfactum News Agency said Mr. Gorbachev was accused of defaming Mayor Yuri Luzhkov after televised remarks accusing the Moscow administration of using public funds to build personal villas on the outskirts of the capital.

Fingerprints linked to high blood pressure

LONDON (R) — Fingerprints may have a link with health, according to a report published Friday. Dr. Keith Godfrey of the Medical Research Council studied the link between fingerprints, hand shape and blood pressure in 139 men and women. In a report in the British Medical Journal, he said he had found that people who had whorl-type fingerprints and those with long palms also had a tendency to high blood pressure. While the reason was not clear, Dr. Godfrey noted that fingerprints were determined while a foetus was still developing in the womb.

Meteorite thieves baffle police

RESISTENCIA, Argentina (AFP) — Authorities in the town of Charata, some 700 kilometres northwest of Buenos Aires, are mystified over why thieves have been taking meteorites from museums. The latest theft was an 80 kilo (175 pound) meteorite that disappeared Wednesday. Earlier this year, a 834-kilo (1,835-pound) meteorite was taken from a schoolyard, authorities said. Police have speculated that robbers may have taken the space packs to extract precious metals from them, while other recent press accounts blame foreign collectors for taking the meteors.

Sports

WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Morceli faces Olympic ban

STUTTGART, Germany (AP) — World athletics chief Primo Mediolio says Algeria's 1,500m world champion Noureddine Morceli will miss the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996 if he carries out his threat to boycott the world championships here.

Morceli, the world record holder at the distance, wants a cash prize for victory instead of the Mercedes Benz saloon car being offered to the gold medalists.

But Mediolio, president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, Friday spelled out the punishment which awaits the Algerian if he fails to appear here without good reason.

"We have made it very clear about participation in the world championships," Mediolio warned.

"Athletes who are being sent by their federations have the obligation to take part, naturally if they are not injured or ill. If they say 'no', the rules are very clear."

"Two months suspension from the end of the world championships... and after, ineligibility for the next Olympic Games in the United States."

But Mediolio expressed his fervent hope the Algerian star will make it to Stuttgart.

"I hope very strongly Morceli will come and compete. I hope this because I am very close to Morceli. He's a boy I appreciate very much. He's a great champion and I hope, nearly strongly."



Noureddine Morceli

Christie will start underdog in 100m

STUTTGART (R) — Olympic champion Linford Christie, appearing supremely relaxed on the eve of the fourth world athletics championships, said Friday he would be the underdog in Sunday's 100 metres final.

The Briton is scheduled to meet defending champion and world record-holder Leroy Burrell, who failed to make the U.S. team.

The other two Americans — Dennis Mitchell and Andre Cason — have both reported fit and chief track coach Ed Jacoby said Friday he thought the U.S. team was one of the best ever assembled.

Jacoby also revealed that world 200 metres women's champion Gwen Torrence was bidding for four titles here. He said Torrence would race the 100 and 200 and also run on both relay teams.

Two finals will be decided Saturday — the women's 10-km walk and the men's marathon.

Form is notoriously hard to assess in the marathon but Kenya's Cosmas Ndeti must start as one of the race favourites, especially if Friday's weather forecast is correct and temperatures reach 30 degrees Celsius Saturday afternoon.

Ndeti, silver medalist at the 1989 world junior cross-country championships, won this year's Boston marathon.

Another leading contender will be South African Willis Mmulo, winner of last year's New York marathon.

favourite for the 100.

"After the first day and the first two races we can start to see the situation," the American said.

All the world's top sprinters will be present Saturday with the exception of former world record holder Leroy Burrell, who failed to make the U.S. team.

The other two Americans — Dennis Mitchell and Andre Cason — have both reported fit and chief track coach Ed Jacoby said Friday he thought the U.S. team was one of the best ever assembled.

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Gabriela Sabatini

Sabatini takes advantage of Austin's errors

MANHATTAN BEACH, California (AP) — Gabriela Sabatini capitalised on a rash of errors by Tracy Austin for a 6-1, 6-3 victory Thursday night in the third round of the Virginia Slims of Los Angeles.

Sabatini, No. 5 in the world, is the highest-ranked player Austin has faced since the 30-year-old made her first comeback nearly four years ago.

Austin, a two-time U.S. Open champion, is not ranked in her latest comeback from injuries sustained in a car accident in 1989.

"I don't think the score reflects the match — 6-1 in the first set took 45 minutes," Austin said.

Austin is 2-3 in her comeback attempts this year. She reached the third round of the Evert Cup in February and lost in the first round of the Lipton International in March. She plans to play in the Canadian Open next week.

Austin led 40-0 on her serve and gave up two points to Sabatini before closing to 5-3. Sabatini served a love game and won the 1-hour, 30-minute match on a down-the-line forehand.

"I'm very happy with the way, I played, but I'm disappointed that I didn't capitalize on my chances," Austin said. "I think with the lack of matches I played a few loose points."

Sanchez Vicario appeared on her way to a straight-set victory when she broke service to lead 5-4 in the second set. However, Halard broke back after Sanchez Vicario failed to capitalize on two match points.

Sanchez Vicario broke service again in the 11th game to lead 6-5, but Halard broke back again after surviving another match point and forced a tiebreaker. After Halard won the tiebreaker 7-4, Sanchez Vicario took command.

Judge calls in mayor with alibi for club chief

VALENCIENNES, France (R) — The judge probing allegations of match-rigging by European soccer champions Marseille said Friday he wants to interview a town mayor who has provided an alibi for club chairman Bernard Tapie.

Judicial sources said Judge Bernard Boffy had put in an official request to interview Bernard Mayor Jacques Mellick, a former Socialist government minister. This followed Mellick's refusal to respond to verbal requests, they said.

The Mellick affair is the latest complicated twist in investigations into allegations that Marseille tried to bribe Valenciennes to lose a May 20 league match.

Former Valenciennes trainer Boro Primorac has alleged he was offered money on Tapie's behalf to take the blame for rigging the match. He says he met Tapie at his offices June 17.

Tapie has denied the charge and said there was no meeting with Primorac.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Americans dominate PAN Pacific swimming championship

KOBE, JAPAN (AP) — American swimmers dominated the Pan Pacific swimming championship Friday as world record holder Jenny Thompson won the women's 100-metre freestyle and fellow American Jon Olsen took the men's event. The 20-year-old Thompson, the Barcelona Olympic silver medalist, was timed in 55.25 seconds, above her world mark of 54.48. Australian Susan O'Neill came in second in 55.80, followed by Angel Martino of the United States in 55.97. Olsen took the men's 100-metre freestyle in 49.73 seconds. Australian Christopher Fyler finished second in 50.02 and John Steel of New Zealand was third in 50.12.

America's Anita Nall took the women's 100-metre breaststroke with a meet record of 1:09.11, bettering the old mark of 1:09.70 set by Keltie Duggan of Canada in 1989. Australian Samantha Riley was second in 1:09.18 and Canadian Guylaine Cloutier was third in 1:09.93. Australia took the day's first gold medal as Philip Rogers stroked to victory in the men's 100-metre breaststroke in 1:01.56, a meet record. The previous mark of 1:02.02 was set by Mike Barrowman of the United States in 1991. Japan's Akira Hayashi came in second in 1:01.82, third place went to American Seth Van Norder in 1:02.35.

Seles will miss U.S. Open

VAIL, Colorado (R) — Monica Seles, who has been sidelined since she was stabbed by a spectator during a match in Germany in April, will not be able to defend her title at the U.S. Open tennis championships, her doctors said Thursday. Doctors Richard Steadman and Richard Hawkins, who have supervised Seles' rehabilitation programme at the Steadman Hawkins Clinic in Vail, Colorado, said the tennis star was recovering but not ready to return to action. "Monica's progress and rehabilitation continue," Doctors Steadman and Hawkins said in a joint statement. "She is not yet ready to return to competitive tennis, and we are continuing to monitor her progress and work with her on the next phases of her rehabilitation." Seles would have been going for a third consecutive U.S. Open title when the year's final Grand Slam event begins August 30. Seles has already missed the French Open, where she would have gone for a fourth successive title, and Wimbledon since being attacked in Hamburg April 30. She has also lost her world number one ranking to Steffi Graf because of her inability to compete. "There is still no way to accurately predict when she will be able to return to daily competition," the statement said. Seles was stabbed in the upper back during a changeover of her semifinal match against Magdalena Maleeva at the Citizen Cup tennis championship in Vail. A spectator who later claimed to be a Graf fan wanting to put her chief rival out of action. The knife penetrated Seles' back about an inch and her attacker, identified as Guenter Parche, was later charged with attempted murder.

Prost fastest yet again

BUDAPEST (R) — World championship leader Alain Prost was at his unruffled best Friday as rivals struggled to master the slippery track in opening qualifying for Sunday's Hungarian Grand Prix. Prost, driving his Williams with a smoothness which set him apart, clocked the best time of one minute 15.488 seconds on the tight, twisting and dusty Hungaroring. His time left him narrowly clear of the Benetton of Michael Schumacher, who recorded 1:16.003 in the final seconds of the session. Prost's team-mate Damon Hill was third best in 1:16.135.

Germany the best say FIFA

ZURICH (R) — Germany were officially declared the world's best team Friday when FIFA unveiled its first international ranking list. The rankings, launched in a joint marketing venture with Coca Cola, put the world champions ahead of Italy, with Switzerland a surprising third following their dramatic recent improvement in World Cup qualifying form. The rankings, compiled by mathematicians from a complex points system based on matches over the last six years, is aimed at producing a definitive league table of the world's national sides. Germany's Coach Bert Vogts said: "This whole concept is a great idea. It now puts the pressure on all trainers in the top 10 to maintain their rankings." FIFA said the rankings were partly in response to demands from the soccer world for an official classification of national teams' standings.

EMBASSY OF INDIA AMMAN INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

To mark the 46th anniversary of the Independence Day of India, a flag hoisting ceremony will be held on Sunday, 15th August, 1993 at 10 a.m. at the premises of the Embassy of India, 1st circle, Jabal Amman. All Indians with their families are cordially invited to attend the function.

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Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
AKQ10852 K6 Void 49852
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

Q.2—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
AQ106 J643 K5 AK97
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
54 AKQ102 AKQ 10993
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 1 NT Pass
2 What do you bid now?

Q.4—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

A88 K74 JTS AKQJ94
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 Pass 2 Pass
2 What do you bid now?

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
AK943 J6 K8842 AKQ6
Partner opens the bidding with three clubs and the next hand passes. What action do you take?

Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
2QJ8 AK10 AK943 AKQ2
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 NT Pass
2 What action do you take? Look for answers on Monday.

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Fresh battle breaks Sudan truce, cuts relief routes

KAYA, Sudan (Agencies) — A fresh offensive by Sudan's government army against southern rebels along the Ugandan border threatens to cut relief supply routes to huge areas affected by famine, churchmen and aid workers said.

Guerrillas of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the frontier town of Kaya said they had been battling to drive back an advancing force of 5,000 government troops for the last week.

Backed by Antonov bombers and MiG fighter planes, government troops overran the village of Morobo 15 kilometres north of Kaya on Sunday, they said.

The fresh fighting effectively rips apart a truce declared by the warring sides in March to allow foreign relief groups to get food to tens of thousands of needy civilians — the main victims of a civil war of attrition that has raged since 1983.

"Heavy fighting is still taking place in Morobo. Our intention is to throw the government forces out of the town," SPLA commander Pitia Diliha told reporters who visited Kaya.

Kaya and Morobo lie along a muddy track that is nevertheless a strategic artery for relief supplies trucked in from Uganda to the entire Western Equatoria province, much of which is still held by the SPLA.

"The government aim is to seal off the border with Uganda," said Kaya's Anglican Bishop Seme Solomon, who fled in terror to escape the clashes with more than 25,000 refugees into Uganda last week.

"Should that happen, many people will starve to death," said Father Peter Dada, a Catholic priest also from Kaya.

Relief workers estimate that about 500,000 people have died in the war — most of the south's population of 4.5 million. The ramshackle town of Kaya was completely deserted except for a few ragged SPLA fighters when reporters visited. Local residents said the rebels numbered just 600 in the area.

The refugees, who moved out on SPLA orders, took their few belongings and trekked through thick bush south to the Ugandan town of Arua.

They are now camped in two transit centres in Arua, where U.N. and other relief groups are distributing food. The Ugandan authorities have set aside land for them to farm, suggesting they expect the refugees to stay for some time.

Political analysts expect the government force to swing eastwards and move on the town of Kajo Kaji if they capture Kaya. If they take Kajo Kaji, they can move on the frontier town of Nimule which lies on the eastern banks of the Nile and would be the last proper supply route for the SPLA and civilians on the rebel side.

The government army, which bulldozed its way across a vast swathe of the south in last year's dry season offensive and took a string of rebel-held towns, is squeezing SPLA rebels under guerrilla chief John Garang tight against the Ugandan border.

The black and mainly Christian SPLA, which for 10 years has

fought the Arabised Muslim north, splintered into factions along tribal lines two years ago.

"The split has left SPLA forces weak and strengthened the government side," Bishop Solomon said gloomily.

A representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) accompanied reporters to Kaya and urged the Khartoum government to cease all military activities in the region.

"We once again appeal to the Sudanese authorities to suspend military activities in the area. We do this on humanitarian grounds," Panos Moutis said.

EC aid for Sudan

The Commission of European Communities (EC) is to contribute six million ECUs (\$5.31 million) to relief programmes for people affected by drought and conflict in Sudan, a statement from the EC delegation said Friday.

This is a continuation of the 6.7 million (\$5.93 million) granted by the EC in the humanitarian field for emergency food and non-food aid since the beginning of 1992 to assist Sudan's population affected or displaced by civil war, the statement said.

The aid, together with another provision of 360,000 tonnes of cereal food and 32.3 million ECUs (\$28.58 million) from Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland and Netherlands, made EC donations to Sudan's war and drought victims the largest ever at a total of 45 million ECUs (\$39.92 million).



CLASHES IN SEOUL: South Korean dissident students clash with riot police in front of Seoul's Yonsei University Friday on the eve of an illegal "Pan National Rally." Police fired volleys of tear-gas as the students made their way out of the campus where nearly 2,000

students were gathering to prepare for the Pan National Rally on Aug. 15 during which the dissidents plan to link up with North Korean students (AFP photo)

Jordan's father found dead

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — The body of James Jordan, father of NBA superstar Michael Jordan, was found floating in a South Carolina river, and authorities said Friday he had been shot to death.

Jordan, 57, died of a gunshot wound to the chest, Cumberland County officials said at a news conference Friday. The body was found near Bennettsville, S.C., about 60 miles (95 kilometres) southwest of Fayetteville.

Dental records helped to confirm the identity of the body found in Marlboro County, S.C. authorities have no suspects and said they have not determined a motive.

Michael Jordan is vacationing in California and has made no public statements about his father.

Chicago radio station WBBM quoted Bulls' general manager Jerry Krause as saying, "Oh my God. Oh my God," when told of the discovery of Jordan's body. James Jordan hadn't been seen in three weeks but the family had not reported him missing. His expensive car was found Aug. 5, the same day the body was discovered, in a wooded area near Fayetteville. The red Lexus 400 had been partially disassembled and some of its parts stolen or "stripped."

Family and friends said it wasn't unusual for the elder Jordan to stay out of touch for long periods of time, but a three-week disappearance was unprecedented.

Members of Michael Jordan's security staff flew to Fayetteville from Chicago earlier this week to identify James Jordan's car.

James Jordan was last seen July 22 after attending the funeral of a friend in Burgaw, 60 miles (95 kilometres) southeast of Fayetteville, Cumberland County sheriff Morris Besole said.

After the funeral, Jordan stopped at the home of the widow, Azella Kemp, before driving some friends back to Wilmington, Mrs. Kemp said.

Carolyn Robinson, who rode with him, said Jordan told her he had to return to Charlotte to catch a plane to Chicago the next day.

"He talked to his office on the phone while we were driving back," Mrs. Robinson said. She heard him say that after his Chicago trip, he planned to be in South Carolina.

Jordan stopped at Mrs. Robinson's home, ate a late dinner and visited before changing clothes for the drive home, she said.

Mediators call break in Bosnia peace talks; NATO drafts plans

GENEVA (Agencies) — International mediators Lord Owes and Thorvald Stoltenberg called a weekend break in Bosnian peace talks on Friday to allow Serbs time to complete a withdrawal on strategic heights overlooking Sarajevo.

Their spokesman said the pause followed United Nations reports of a further Serb pull-back from Mount Igman, where British Brigadier Vere Hayes, chief of staff of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Bosnia, and a Serb general were inspecting a disputed ceasefire line.

The co-chairmen have had oews of further Serb withdrawals today and will be discussing the ceasefire line with Brig. Hayes later, spokesman John Mills told reporters.

"The co-chairmen have decided to have a pause in the negotiations and intend to call all the parties together on Monday afternoon."

The Serbs' presence on Igman, which they captured while the warring factions talked peace in Geneva, has stalled peace negotiations for more than a week.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic has refused to negotiate directly with his Serb and Croat forces on the shape of three ethnic republics until the Serbs complete a withdrawal

agreed with the U.N.

Sources close to the talks said the two-day break should give U.N. peacekeepers in Sarajevo time to settle the Igman dispute — which the Serbs say results from confusion over July 30 ceasefire lines — and allow the Muslim-led government, the Croats and the Serbs to prepare negotiating positions for full-scale talks.

Serb leader Radovan Karadzic told Reuters he would stay in Geneva over the weekend and said he had been told by his forces the Igman ceasefire line had already been agreed.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) should complete detailed plans this weekend to identify targets for air strikes aimed at forcing Bosnian Serbs to ease their stranglehold on Sarajevo, NATO sources said in Brussels Friday.

They said NATO's political committee was meeting regularly to keep the situation in Bosnia under review so that the alliance would be ready to move as soon as a request was made to call an emergency meeting of the NATO council.

Operational details of air strikes, including target identification, are being handled by

military chiefs of Allied Forces Southern Europe Command based in Naples in coordination with commanders of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia, the sources said.

At the council's last meeting on Monday, NATO ambassadors stepped up the pressure on the Bosnian Serbs by approving a report from the alliance's military committee giving options for air strikes. They ordered detailed target identification.

The NATO envoys could be convened at short notice for a council session. Any decision by it to go ahead with air strikes would be subject to a final decision by United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

One source said the alliance, in judging whether air strikes should be launched, was not looking at "one individual act" by the Bosnian Serbs, such as their withdrawal from the commanding heights of Mount Igman.

NATO would also be influenced by how serious the Bosnian Serbs were about resuming peace negotiations, their readiness to allow substantial resumption of humanitarian relief shipments and permit water and other services to be restored to the Bosnian capital, to stop seizing territory and to cease ethnic cleansing, the sources added.

Palestinian resignation crisis ends,

(Continued from page 1)

However, the integration of Palestinians from the occupied territories in the PLO's decision-making structure could lead to more active participation in decisions and in enacting long-called for reforms in the PLO, but only if the mixed committee functioned properly.

The working plan outlining relations between the "inside" and the "outside" that was endorsed by the PLO's Executive Committee in line with a proposal by the delegation aims at defining the functions of the leadership and the delegation in the peace talks as well as in the occupied territories.

"The delegation's proposals to the leadership stemmed from the need to improve the Palestinian political system and the decision-making mechanism in order to incorporate the Palestinian political society inside the occupied territories which is growing in importance," peace delegate Ghassan Al-Khatib told the Jordan Times. Dr. Ashrawi said that by issuing calls for collective leadership and consultations "we are simply trying to do justice to segments of the Palestinian community."

Calls for a collective leadership and democratic reforms have been spearheaded by chief peace negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi, who warned against further Palestinian political divisions and predicted the ultimate collapse of the PLO if Palestinians pursued negotiations without unity or

democratic reforms.

Although the crisis had heightened differences between the diaspora and the Palestinian leadership inside the occupied territories, the real issues at stake were not geographic.

Some officials argued that a well-defined decision-making mechanism and improved relations with the local leaders could well solve outstanding problems because Palestinians are not in the business of seeking an alternative leadership.

They said that if Israel talked to the PLO, the delegation would have more confidence in itself and the PLO would stop using alternative communication channels.

"It is likely that direct talks between the PLO and Israel will take place soon," Dr. Ashrawi said. "The PLO is the representative of the Palestinian people, it is the people's national dimension and identity."

The PLO has publicly been guiding the delegation in the 21-month-old peace talks, but Israel has only recently lifted a ban on PLO contacts, specifically since Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party ousted the hardline Likud party of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. But Mr. Rabin still insists on negotiating only with Palestinians from the occupied territories, although members of his coalition government are known to have met PLO officials over the past few months.

Japan emperor to visit Europe in September

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko will pay their first official visit to Europe from Sept. 3 to 19, the government announced Friday.

The imperial couple will travel to Italy, Belgium and Germany where they will meet members of other royal families and government leaders, it said. In Rome, the Emperor and Empress will have an audience with Pope John Paul II. Emperor Akihito has travelled widely since ascending the chrysanthemum throne after the death of his father, Emperor Hirohito, in 1989. In 1991 he became the first emperor to visit Asia when he toured Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia in the company of Empress Michiko. Last year the couple paid a historic visit to China.

Mayor linked to Philippine murders arrested

MANILA (R) — Police arrested a Philippine town mayor linked to the murder of two university students Friday after a new witness accused him of raping one of the victims. Antonio Sanchez, mayor of Caluan town in Laguna province, south of Manila, faces charges of rape and being an accessory to murder, the Criminal Intelligence Service said. "We have ample evidence to bring Mayor Sanchez to court," Chief Superintendent Manuel Salimhangan told reporters. Formal rape and murder charges are expected to be filed with the court shortly. "I have nothing to do with that (rape and killing)," Mr. Sanchez told reporters. He was perspiring profusely and having his blood pressure checked by a doctor. President Fidel Ramos had asked for the swift resolution of the case after a popular outcry over the incident, which dominated newspaper headlines for several weeks. Aurelio Centino, a driver for the mayor, told police he drove Allan Gomez and Eileen Sarmiento to a safehouse where Mr. Sanchez was waiting for them last June. He alleged that Mr. Sanchez then raped Sarmiento repeatedly and gave the girl to his bodyguard who also abused her. The two students were then murdered.

Japan bureaucrats well-treated after retirement

TOKYO (R) — Japanese bureaucrats endure low pay and long working hours because many can look forward to lucrative executive jobs in the private sector and government-affiliated firms after retirement, a survey says. The survey by the labour federation of government-related organisations showed that former bureaucrats made up 75 per cent of the top echelon of government-affiliated corporations last year, major Japanese newspapers reported Friday. Sixty-five corporations which responded to the union's survey, released this week, reported that no fewer than 288 of a total 383 executives were former employees of government ministries and agencies as of late last year. Under the time-honoured Japanese practice known as "amakudari" (descending from heaven), retiring senior bureaucrats get highly-paid posts in the private sector or government-affiliated companies. In exchange they are expected to use their influence to help their new employers.

Women executives a rare species in Japan — survey

TOKYO (R) — Japan's new Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa has appointed a record number of women to his cabinet, but a survey shows that in Japan's male-dominated business world, women executives remained a rare species. According to a survey by publishing company Toyo Keizai, there were only 48 female directors at 2,128 companies listed on Japan's eight stock exchanges as of July, a tiny 0.1 per cent of the total. Five years ago, listed companies had 31 female directors, but the ratio to the total number was about the same at 0.1 per cent, the survey said. "Although women are playing more roles in society, the appointment of women to senior company posts has not proceeded yet," it said. On Monday Mr. Hosokawa announced a new cabinet that included three women, the largest number of female ministers in any postwar cabinet. They now head the Economic Planning Agency (EPA), Environmental Agency and Ministry of Education. "We can say the business world is less open than the political world," the survey said.

Iraq needs total end to sanctions — paper

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq needs an end to U.N. sanctions rather than partial oil sales under U.N. supervision, the newspaper of the Iraqi ruling party said Friday.

"We need the removal of the embargo and not partial oil sales," the newspaper Al Thawra said in an article.

"You aggressors (the United States and its allies) we demand the lifting of all sanctions and not just some oil," it added.

Iraqi officials discussed partial oil sales with the United Nations in New York last month but the talks were suspended without an agreement.

The United Nations is offering to let Iraq sell oil worth \$1.6 billion to pay for urgent humanitarian needs and financial obligations under the terms of a Gulf war ceasefire.

But Al Thawra said the U.N. Security Council was now under an obligation to lift the crippling trade sanctions.

The Security Council says it will lift the embargo only when Iraq has complied with all the ceasefire terms.

One condition is that Iraq must convince a U.N. special commission that it has complied with all the restrictions on weapons.

U.N. weapons officials say Iraq has not yet met all its obligations. For the oil embargo to be lifted, they say, Iraq has at least several more months to go.

Iraq says it has honoured most if not all of its commitments but the United Nations has done nothing to ease the embargo.

"Al Thawra said Iraq was committed to obligations under the ceasefire terms and therefore "the Security Council has to honour its obligations and immediately remove the sanctions."

ANC youth leader's remarks spark furor

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies) — Criticism mounted Friday over an African National Congress (ANC) leader's call for militant youths to direct their gunfire at President F.W. de Klerk.

Peter Mokaba, the fiery leader of the ANC Youth League, told a funeral service Thursday for victims of a recent massacre that people in black townships should drive out government security forces and take their struggle to white areas.

When people in the crowd fired shots in the air, Mr. Mokaba told them to stop wasting bullets.

"Direct them against de Klerk. We don't have enough ammunition," said Mr. Mokaba, whose militant rhetoric has stirred up repeated controversies.

The government and ruling National Party immediately complained the statements would cause further violence in black townships, where more than 200 people have been killed in the past two weeks.

On Friday, the chairman of a national peace committee said Mr. Mokaba's comments, if reported accurately, violated a national peace accord signed by all major parties, including the ANC. He said the incident would be investigated.

The peace accord calls for all signatories to refrain from violence or inflammatory statements. But it has failed to halt chronic political violence that has killed thousands of blacks in recent years.

Law and Order Ministry spokesman Craig Kotze called Mr. Mokaba's statements "political arson," while the National Party said the ANC was split between radicals encouraging violence and moderates calling for peace.

An ANC spokesman said the group would study Mr. Mokaba's speech before issuing any state-

Peace force proposed

The news agency SAPA reported a proposal for a multi-party peacekeeping force to oversee the run-up to South Africa's first non-racial election next April was unveiled at democracy negotiations Thursday.

SAPA said the proposal, drawn up by a committee of negotiators, calls for the peace force to be made up of all military forces belonging to the 26 parties taking part in democracy talks.

The plan for a peace force was first put to democracy negotiators by the ANC on Aug. 2, in the wake of black township violence.

But the plan ran into immediate problems a day later, with right-wingers accusing the government of weakness and refusing to have anything to do with it.

While President de Klerk has endorsed the idea, his views on how it should be formed differ sharply with those of the ANC.

Mr. de Klerk insists the force will play an auxiliary role to the present security force and would not be combatant.

General strike against regime paralyzes Lagos

LAGOS (AP) — Some cars and taxis returned to the streets of Nigeria's commercial capital Friday, but this normally noisy, bustling city stayed relatively quiet for the second day of a general strike.

Supermarkets, banks and factories were shut, and most major bus and train terminals were empty Friday morning. A few residents ventured to work after the government warned Thursday night that it would fire absent workers.

The stay-at-home demonstration was called to protest the military government's refusal to surrender power after June elections.

The first day of the three-day strike turned the country's largest city into a ghost town of shuttered shops patrolled by armed troops. Friday, cars returned to the streets and a few vendors sold yams, eggplants and oranges.

But strike leaders still called the protest a success.

"I agree there's increased activity today, but by the large people are holding out, the stay-at-home order is still largely effective," said Olisa Agbakoba, president of the Civil Liberties

Organisation, one of the 41 human rights groups that called the protest.

The military government claimed the strike's opening day failed to keep people at home. Information Secretary Uche Chukwumerije broadcast a statement claiming Lagos returned to normal by midday Thursday.

"The city was beginning to witness the usual traffic jams as people went about their business," he said, congratulating "the patriotism and the courage of Nigerians, especially those in Lagos, who shunned the devilish campaign of hired agents."

In fact, in late afternoon Thursday it took 20 minutes to drive between the neighbourhoods of Ikoyi and Ikeja, a trip that took two hours on Tuesday as residents scurried to get business done and stock up cupboards before the strike.

Troops backed by helicopter gunships were sent in to prevent a repeat of the ferocious rioting and looting that reportedly killed more than 100 people during a similar strike last month.

So far, compliance with the strike has appeared limited to the southwest corner of the nation,

the stronghold of the apparent winner of the June 12 election, billionaire businessman Moshood K.O. Abiola.

This reflected the tribal, religious and regional rifts that long have plagued the world's most influential and populous black nation of about 90 million people. Many southerners contend the election was voided because Abiola, although a Muslim himself, would have been Nigeria's first president from the predominantly Christian south.

In Lagos, even federal government buildings and foreign embassies were closed Thursday. "It's just like a holiday," said politician and businesswoman Bola King. "But I think many people stayed away more out of fear of being molested."

She showed a threatening leaflet from a previously unknown organisation, the August National Struggle Council, distributed under doors and stuck on windshields in the past week.

"Don't be burnt alive inside your vehicles," it warned. "Don't turn your wives into widows and your children into orphans. Be on the side of God. Be on the side of the people."

Mr. Agbakoba said Friday the leader of the highest oil workers' union, Joseph Akinlaja, was arrested Thursday night after he warned he would paralyse the oil industry with a strike if the military did not surrender power.

Bomb plot alleged

The military rulers, struggling with their gravest crisis in a decade, accused opponents Friday of plotting a bombing campaign in support of "a disgruntled politician" now abroad.

The charges did not name the politician but clearly referred to Mr. Abiola.

Mr. Abiola's supporters called the allegations "absurd."

The plot statement, signed by Information Secretary Uche Chukwumerije, said conspirators planned bomb explosions in Lagos, Abuja and the northern city of Kaduna between Aug. 16 and 25, and intended to blow up the north-south oil pipeline near Kaduna.

It said plotters planned to distribute 10 million naira (\$455,000) to trade unions and other dissidents "to step up the acts of incitement."

Assad expects progress

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calls its role as a "full partner" at the discussions.

Asked whether the United States expected delegates to be on the same level as at the last round, which ended in late June, the spokesman replied: "I don't anticipate any change in the format."

Describing Mr. Christopher's hopes, Mr. McCurry said the secretary was prepared for a painstakingly slow process, "inch by inch."

"I would say centimetre by centimetre," he added. "Millimetre by millimetre."

In Tunis, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee member said the Palestinians received an invitation from the United States Friday to resume the peace talks in Washington on Aug. 30.

"Today they sent an invitation to us that there will be a new round of talks on 30th August," Yasser Abed Rabbo told Reuters.

He said the Palestinians would decide whether to attend at a meeting with the other Arab parties to the talks.

But Mr. Abed Rabbo and other Palestinians in the peace process said they wanted to attend the talks.

France welcomes the resumption of peace talks, deputy foreign ministry spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said Friday.

Reacting to the announcement that Israel would be negotiating for the first time with a PLO delegation, she emphasised that France had always been in favour of direct talks between Israel and the PLO.

Israel-PLO

(Continued from page 1)

erected between the delegates from the occupied territories and anyone from the Palestinian diaspora.

His former top aide Yossi Ben Aharon said, "If this government wants to conduct negotiations with the PLO it should say it is negotiating with the PLO. But to say what happened in Tunis is nothing and has no importance... that is fraud."

He said the Likud government agreed with Bush administration officials that Israel and the United States would leave the talks if delegation members openly declared their PLO ties.

Dr. Ashrawi said the delegation would continue to handle negotiations, but any agreement had to involve the PLO.

"An agreement will have to be worked out between the government of Israel and the PLO,"